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And How I Ended Poverty

A True Story of the Future

By UPTON SINCLAIR

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I, GOVERNOR OF CALIFORNIA
AND HOW I ENDED POVERTY

A True Story of the Future

By UPTON SINCLAIR

The beginning of this story was a letter from a gentleman in Santa Monica, urging me to join the Democratic party, and permit him and some of his friends, members of the County Central Committee, to put me forward as candidate of the party for Governor of California in 1934. In spite of resolutions I had made to keep out of politics, I found myself thinking continually about this idea.

It happens that I am a Democrat by the same right that makes us Americans either Democrats or Republicans—I was born one. My father, an old-fashioned gentleman from Virginia, would have considered himself degraded if he had so much as thought of voting the Republican ticket. My grandfather, Captain Arthur Sinclair, commander of a U. S. naval vessel which helped to open Japan to the Western world, was a Democrat. My great-grandfather, Commodore Arthur Sinclair, commander of the "Congress," the first frigate built by this nation, was a Democrat. How did I cease to be one?

Or did I really cease? It is a question of the meaning of a word. I was brought up in New York City, where the word Democrat meant the infamies of Tammany Hall. Of course I could not be a Democrat in New York. But if by the name you mean an advocate of the right of the people to manage their own affairs, then I am still the Democrat I was born. In childhood I was a pupil of the founder of the Democratic party, Thomas Jefferson, who wrote: "The general spread of the light of science has already laid open to every view the palpable truth, that the mass of mankind has not been born with saddles on their backs, nor a favored few booted and spurred, ready to ride them legitimately, by the grace of God."

This is the basis of Democracy, and I like this idea so well that I seek to apply it, not merely to the field of politics and government, but to that of business and industry. I am as much

opposed to the "booted and spurred" gentry in the banking-house and the swivel-chair as I am to those in the governor's mansion. I say that God created the natural sources of wealth for the use of all mankind, and not for the monopoly of a few. I say that the means of producing and distributing the necessities of life should be in the hands of the entire people, to be used for the people's equal benefit, and not for any privileged class.

It happens that the late John Sharp Williams, Senator from Mississippi, and one of the most brilliant of Democratic statesmen, was a cousin of my wife's, and twenty years ago she sent him some of my books. The old gentleman wrote back: "This is not Socialism, this is nothing but Jeffersonian Democracy." During the World War, when I was publishing a magazine to persuade the Socialist party to support the policies of our government, and some bureaucrat in the Post Office Department decided that my Democracy was too thorough-going, John Sharp Williams took up my claim with the Solicitor of the Department, and wrote what he called "a fourteen-page brief" in my support. One sentence of his argument was: "I will undertake to read that paragraph to the President, and if he doesn't endorse every word of it, I'll eat my hat." This test was made. The Senator and Col. House took the matter to Woodrow Wilson, who supported me; and the Senator kept his hat to wear.

I saw the founders of American Democracy betrayed, and their party sold to corruptionists; so I joined a party of the new day, the Socialist party, whose faith is Industrial Democracy. Nearly thirty years ago I founded an organization, the League for Industrial Democracy, which has had wide influence in American colleges, and helped to train those minds which now constitute the so-called "brain trust" in Washington. These men, whether they know it or not, are the children of my thought. It is interesting to note that in the first book I wrote in support of my new ideas, "The Industrial Republic," published in 1907, I predicted that the Democratic party would be the instrument through which the needed changes would be brought about in America. I declared that the Democratic president who performed this service would "write his name in our history beside the names of Washington and Lincoln."

I have watched with satisfaction a new birth of the Democratic principle under the leadership of Franklin D. Roosevelt. He has barely got started on his journey, but he is headed in the right direction, towards government control of business and industry—and I am shoving! When Democrats invite me to join their party and become their candidate in California, my hesita-

tions are not political, but personal. I have to explain them, in order that you may understand the sort of man you are dealing with, and what he has to offer.

The thirty-nine writing years of my life have been interrupted many times by what in our family are known as "crusades." A "crusade" to save the American people from being fed poisoned meat; a "crusade" against slavery in the steel mills, and one against child labor, and one on behalf of woman's suffrage; a "crusade" for the women and children of the Colorado coal-mines, who had been shot and burned to death by Rockefeller gunmen; a "crusade" to support America's cause in the World War; a "crusade" to defend civil liberty in Southern California—so through a long list. Each of these episodes took its toll of time, money, and health. On the last-named occasion I made so bold as to attempt to read the Constitution of the United States in public, while standing on private property with the written consent of the owner; for which offense I was arrested and kidnapped by the Los Angeles police and held incommunicado for eighteen hours—a most unpleasant experience to myself and a harrowing one for my wife. Of late, being no longer so young, I have said to myself, "No more of this!" I have said to my wife, with solemn vows: "From now on I am a writer of books. For the rest of my days I am going to avoid every other claim upon my time and strength." I devised form letters declining to make speeches, to attend congresses and conventions, to do all the many things which people all over the world ask of me.

And now here comes a letter proposing that I shall incur the risk of being elected Governor of California!

There are persons who would welcome such a danger. There are men who like to go into crowds and be stared at and photographed; who like to eat banquets and make after-dinner speeches; who like to stand on platforms and be hurrahed and have the limelight turned upon them. They would find it thrilling to ride about town in a big limousine, with a chauffeur in uniform and half a dozen motorcycle policemen blowing sirens. They would esteem it the triumph of a lifetime to be able to write, "I, John Jones, Governor of California." All I can answer is what I like: to get up early in the morning and go into my garden with a high wall around it, and see the new sunshine on the wet grass, and on the scarlet hibiscus flowers and the pink oleanders and the purple and golden lilies; to stroll around in an old dressing-gown, with my mind full of my next chapter, and then presently bring a typewriter out into the sunshine, and sit there and pick away for three or four hours. After I have had a bit of lunch, I like to sit in the sunshine again—that is what I

came to California for—and read my mail and answer it, and then dig in the garden an hour or two, or else take a walk, and after supper read the magazines or a good book until ten o'clock, and go to sleep with my thoughts on the chapter I am going to write next morning. Once a week I enjoy meeting a few friends, or perhaps going to a show—this is enough of "public life" for me.

By living that way most of the time, I have managed to write forty-seven books, some hundreds of magazine articles, and tens of thousands of letters. A large mail from all over the world keeps me assured that I am not failing of my purposes. In every land, civilized and half-civilized, I have helped to teach the new generation the application of Democracy to business and industry; and at the same time I am saving my health and working power, so that I may live to see these ideals realized, and perhaps to guide the process.

And now it is proposed that I shall drop this routine of life, and go out as a political organizer and campaigner! Travel around making speeches, and saying the same things over and over! Start writing articles, manifestoes, and appeals! Set up a mimeographing machine in my home, and start accumulating a list of district organizers! Have the telephone ringing all day, and visitors calling when I want to think—how well I know it, from many experiences!

This new "crusade" would be the longest of all. I should have to give fourteen months to organizing and campaigning, and then, if I were elected, I should have to devote four years to a hard and complex practical job. I should have to face all kinds of slander and misrepresentation, perhaps betrayal, perhaps destruction by the cruel and wicked forces which rule our world today. If I were to put my hand to this red-hot plow it would be goodbye to any thought of writing books for five years, possibly forever. It would mean goodbye to peace, rest, health, happiness—possibly forever!

And yet, night after night, I found myself lying awake, thinking about this battle and this job. If my lifetime study of our political and industrial problems has taught me anything, we Americans confront today the greatest crisis in our history. Ever since the Civil War we have been governed by a business autocracy, and there has been a continuous struggle between that autocracy and our political democracy. So far, Big Business has won every skirmish, and now we have come to the final battle. The two systems can no longer exist side by side. One is going stroy the other—the next two or three years will decide ı. And if Big Business wins this fight, if Fascism comes to

America as we have seen it come to Italy and to Germany, what place will there be for an author? What is the use of writing books, and printing and distributing them, only to see them burned by a Hitler?

Nor is it so easy to hold yourself to the job of writing when you hear the thunder of this battle all around you. It is not so easy to enjoy the sunshine and the hibiscus flowers and the oleanders and the lilies, when you know that millions of your fellow-citizens are suffering from hunger. When your doorbell rings and before it stands a trembling wretch who knows that he has no business to disturb you, but is driven to brave your annoyance to beg a bite of bread or a chance to earn a quarter!

The only way I am able to stick to my job is by telling myself, day after day, that by writing books I reach a greater number of people, and in the long run do them the most good. I go on telling myself that with one-half my mind. But then I hear the other half saying: "You have written enough. What the world needs is a deed. What the people need is somebody they can trust—who will show them the way, who will lift a banner and call them to follow it." In short, another "crusade!"

"Look!" says the voice which wakes me in the middle of the night and keeps me awake. "Here in this Golden State are most of the natural sources of wealth. Here is a land ready to produce almost everything which humans need. Here are machines of production, marvellous creations of human ingenuity. Here are roads for distributing, the finest on the whole earth. Here are factories, farms, homes—everything to make people comfortable and secure. Yet a strange paralysis has fallen upon this land. Here are fruits rotting on the ground, and vegetables being dumped into the bays because there is no market for them. Here are thousands of people wandering homeless, and thousands of homes which no one is allowed to occupy. Here are a million people who want work and are not allowed to work. Here are another million being taxed out of homes and farms to provide the money to feed those starving ones, who would be glad to earn their food but are not allowed to!"

I find myself asking a question: What will a monkey do when he has too many cocoanuts? Will he starve to death? Will he let his baby monkeys grow up to be malformed and stunted, because he has gathered too many cocoanuts? What is this madness which has fallen upon the people of my home State, that they starve because they have produced too much food, and go in rags because they have woven too much cloth, and sleep under bridges and in alley-ways because they have built too many

houses? Here we boast the finest school system in the world, here at any rate we have the most costly buildings and the most highly paid staff of teachers—and yet we have not been able to teach our people as much sense as the monkeys in the jungle!

The men who have made this condition are a little band of "insiders," the masters of our chain banks, railroads, and public service corporations. In my book, "The Goose-Step," written ten years ago, I described them as "the Black Hand of California." Ever since the World War they have maintained a terrorist organization known as "The Better America Federation," by means of which they have excluded from public life in this State every man and woman who is not their servant. There is no crime these masters have stopped at. When Francis J. Heney, public prosecutor of San Francisco, was on the point of sending one of them to prison, they had him shot down in open court. When Fremont Older refused to desist from exposing their crimes, they had him kidnaped and spirited away on a train.

These men have the mentality of birds of prey. They are exploiters, to whom men and women are commodities; they are gamblers, so fixed in habit that they cannot find recreation save in trying to win one another's money. Their idea of meeting this depression is to sit tight and wait for the storm to blow over. That this means hundreds of thousands of our people sentenced to slow extermination troubles the masters not at all. So long as the masses submit, they despise them; and when they revolt, they send the police with machine-guns and poison gas.

By their system of subsidizing political parties, these "booted and spurred" ones have had the naming of all our governors. In the eighteen years that I have lived in this State, they have given us half a dozen such officials, of whom I find myself able to recollect the last names of three and the complete name of one; but I cannot recall a single word that any one of these men ever spoke, or any action they took that helped the mass of our people. I have seen corruption rampant in politics, in business, and in the dealings between the two, and I have felt the helplessness of a man in the presence of a forest fire, an avalanche, a tornado.

Three times I left my writing and accepted a nomination at the hands of the Socialist party of California; twice for Governor and once for United States Senator. The largest vote I ever got was about sixty thousand; that representing the number of voters in our State who can be persuaded to step outside the old party reservations. It was in the far-off days of Morgan

and Mellon prosperity, and I wrote: "So long as the present system feeds the people they will keep on voting for it. But wait until it can no longer feed them!"

Now that time has come. We are starting on the last year of our Five Year Plan of Starvation, and it now appears that some minor officials of the Democratic party are no longer satisfied with their leadership in this State, and are looking for their share of the much advertised New Deal.

There is nothing novel about the idea of taking possession of one of the old parties and using it to serve the people. In Wisconsin the elder LaFollette took the Republican party away from the old gang. Hiram Johnson did it in California, Norris did it in Nebraska. Woodrow Wilson took the Democratic party of New Jersey out of the hands of boodlers, and Franklin D. Roosevelt is very earnestly trying to make the Democratic party of the nation into a party of the public welfare. Why cannot the same thing be done by the Democrats of California?

Agreeing upon this idea of a Democrat, I place myself at your service. I am willing, but not anxious. If you can find anyone else who will serve the cause better, I will be pleased. Unfortunately, however, I do not know of any person prominent in your party in California who has pledged himself to this cause. That is the reason I have been called, and assuredly it is the only reason I am responding.

I propose a campaign slogan, brief and simple:

END POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA!

I do not put that forward as a means of catching votes, but as a solemn pledge which I make before the people of this State. I call upon the Democrats of California to have that pledge ratified by their party. I call upon all progressive and humane members of the Republican party to enlist under this banner. I call upon Socialists to fall into line. I call upon all intelligent and fair-minded citizens of this State, of whatever creed and party, to rally to the crusade. I say, positively and without qualification, we can end poverty in California. I know exactly how to do it, and if you elect me Governor, with a Legislature to support me, I will put the job through—and I won't take more than one or two of my four years.

I say there is no excuse for poverty in a civilized and wealthy State like ours. I say that we can and should see to it that all men and women of our State who are willing to work should have work suited to their capacities, and should be paid a wage that will enable them to maintain a decent home and an American

standard of living. I say that every old person should be provided for in comfort, and likewise every orphaned child and every person who is sick or incapacitated. I repeat that this can be done, and that I know how to do it. If I take up the job I will stick until it is finished, and there will be no delay and no shilly-shallying. There will be action, and continuous action, until the last man, woman, and child has these fundamental economic rights. Again I say:

END POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA!

Just how do I mean to do it? It is your right to ask, and my duty to answer. Some of my friends, who think they know about politics, advise me that it is not wise to talk too much. They say, make general statements, and not too strong. They point out that Franklin D. Roosevelt was mild in his promises; if he had announced during his campaign what he was going to do after his inauguration, he would never have been elected. All I can say is that I have to act according to my nature, and it is too late to begin changing on my fifty-fifth birthday. My life's study has been to say what I mean.

I put my proposition in the form of a history. In the pages that follow you will find a record of public events in California, beginning August, 1933, and ending December, 1938. First, I portray events, and then I put down my pen and try to make them happen. You who read this history have to decide what part you will play in it; whether you will be among the Jeffersons, the Washingtons, and the Franklins of this new American revolution, or whether you will be among those whom I cannot name, because history has not preserved their names, but lumps them as "tories" and "royalists."

So far as I know, this is the first time an historian has set out to make his history true. It will be something for the rest of the world to watch, and you, citizens of California, may be conscious of the fact that forty nations as well as forty centuries are looking down upon you. There are forty-seven other States in this Union, each of which has the job of ending poverty, and will be interested to learn how it can be done. There are some among us who preach that the job cannot be done except by violence and class terror. But I assert that there is a peaceful way, an orderly way, a democratic way—and that this is the American way. I call it my Two-Year Plan to make over our State.

I feel the need to apologize for the extent to which this "history" deals with Upton Sinclair and his doings and sayings. In the nature of the case, this is the only material I have. I can be

sure of what I will do and say about this Plan, and how I will behave, both as candidate for office and as Governor; I can make a guess as to how various groups and social classes will behave, but I cannot say what individuals will do, nor have I the right to use the names of individuals, except in a few cases where permission has been granted. So I have to make this my own story, and you have to decide whether you wish it to be yours.

Postscript to Second Edition:

Two weeks after publication, the first edition of ten thousand copies of this book are nearly gone, and my mail is full of letters from persons old and young, high and low, pledging their help to this plan. I am printing twenty thousand more, and saying once more: "It's up to you!"

THIRD EDITION TWENTY THOUSAND

FOURTH EDITION TWENTY THOUSAND

The Twelve Principles of EPIC

(End Poverty In California)

1. God created the natural wealth of the earth for the use of all men, not of a few.
2. God created men to seek their own welfare, not that of masters.
3. Private ownership of tools, a basis of freedom when tools are simple, becomes a basis of enslavement when tools are complex.
4. Autocracy in industry cannot exist alongside democracy in government.
5. When some men live without working, other men are working without living.
6. The existence of luxury in the presence of poverty and destitution is contrary to good morals and sound public policy.
7. The present depression is one of abundance, not of scarcity.
8. The cause of the trouble is that a small class has the wealth, while the rest have the debts.
9. It is contrary to common sense that men should starve because they have raised too much food.
10. The destruction of food or other wealth, or the limitation of production, is economic insanity.
11. The remedy is to give the workers access to the means of production, and let them produce for themselves, not for others.
12. This change can be brought about by action of a majority of the people, and that is the American way.

The People's History of California

1933-1938

CHAPTER I

The Plan

On an evening in August, 1933, there took place a conference attended by five members of the County Central Committee of the Democratic party, Sixtieth Assembly District of the State of California. The meeting was held in the office of the California Hotel, Santa Monica, of which Mr. Stevenson, one of the group, was formerly the owner. The purpose was to consider with Upton Sinclair the possibility of his registering as a Democrat and becoming the candidate of the party for Governor of California.

Mr. Stevenson remarked at the outset: "This is not an aristocratic place in which to hold a political conference. My rooms in this hotel are furnished in the style of our grandfathers. For twelve years I was owner of the Miramar Hotel across the street, which was appraised by the State at $2,136,000. But there were $500,000 in bonds, and so the depression gave the Miramar to the bankers."

Mr. Stevenson went on to say that he had been a member of the Populist party forty years ago, and had learned that the American people always have a choice between the candidates of two leading parties. He had joined the Democratic party, and worked in it for the principles of the Populists, many of which have been realized.

"It is evident," he said, "that the next Governor of California will be either a Republican or a Democrat. The Democratic party of this State has no definite program and no candidate who means anything in particular to the public. The Republicans will probably put up a complete reactionary, and he will be elected. It is our hope that Upton Sinclair will register as a Democrat and stand as a candidate at the Democratic primaries, with a definite program which the people will understand. If he does this, he will get the votes of all forward-looking elements in the Democratic party, especially the young people. Not less than 100,000 Progressive Republicans will register as Democrats to help put him across, and I should think that numbers of the Socialists would do the same. I am confident that Sinclair would sweep the primaries, and if so he would be elected."

A doctor who was present thought it might be too early for such a move, since the primary election was nearly a year away. Rev. Mary C. Shaw, a woman minister active in public affairs, declared that the organized women of California were accustomed to make up their minds about political questions a long time in advance. With thousands of study groups now considering the problems of the depression, the women, upon whom the election depended, would make their decisions before the ballyhoo got started.

Upton Sinclair was asked to state his attitude toward the proposal, and said: "It means one thing to me, the possibility of doing a definite job. I have the program clearly in mind, and would like to outline it to you and get your reaction. I have summed it up in a slogan:

"END POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA.

"We confront a real crisis in this State, and I can see no prospect of things getting better. Like all good Americans I am giving my support to the NRA, but I cannot shut my eyes to its failures. The figures which the Government has collected indicate that production has been boosted to the 1926 level, but employment is only 70% of that level and wages only 50%. In other words, under the stress of competition we have so perfected processes that we can turn out the same amount of goods with two-thirds as many workers and one-half the payroll. This means that the people will be able to buy only half of what they were buying in 1926—and their lack of buying power then was what brought on the depression. Very soon our warehouses are going to be crammed with goods for which there is no market. Our manufacturers have borrowed money from the banks to finance new production, expecting inflation and a rise in prices. They will not be able to meet their notes and so there will be another bank crisis.

"As a matter of fact, the NRA program admits its own inadequacy. We are told that the hope is to put six million men to work this fall, but we had fifteen million unemployed when we started, so nine million are left hopeless. My studies of the problem have convinced me that at least one-half the people who are out of work in the United States will never again have work under the profit system. They have built such a perfect machine of production that it can run without them. They have completed the upbuilding of the country, and it is time for them to move on to some other planet.

"Consider the situation here in Los Angeles County. We have more than half a million people getting public relief. We repudiate the British idea of a 'dole,' and say that we are going to

preserve the self-respect of our people by giving them work; but we have no real work, so we take them down into the bed of the Los Angeles River and set them to shoveling sand, making a channel. Of course the river fills it up again in a few days. The work is a farce, and the workers know it is a farce, and it does not do much to keep up their morale.

"And meanwhile the County is going bankrupt. Mobs of irate taxpayers besiege the Supervisors, and these poor fellows do not know which side to favor—the unemployed whose families are starving, or the taxpayers who are about to lose their homes. The County relief officials start cutting down on jobs; men may no longer shovel sand six hours per day, but only four hours. A man is told that he can no longer have his $20 per month relief, because his daughter has a job which pays $50 a month, and a family of half a dozen people are supposed to get along on that. We try to economize in the cost of government, which means that more people are thrown out of jobs and get a dole instead of a salary. In the first four months of this year Los Angeles County took on 63,000 new persons as objects of charity; and in the months of May, June and July there were added 322,500. This sounds incredible, but so it stands in the County records: 75,000 new charity "cases" in three months, each "case" involving 4.3 persons.

"It is manifest that this cannot go on. If it continues for the next fourteen months, I will find myself elected Governor of a bankrupt State with fifty-eight bankrupt counties and a hundred bankrupt cities and towns. The first plank of a political platform today must be to give the unemployed productive work and make them self-supporting. Why is this not done? Why has not every taxpayer demanded that the destitute shall no longer be fed out of the tax funds, but shall be set to work raising their own food and making their own shoes and clothing and shelter?

"The answer is obvious. It is not the taxpayers who govern the State of California; it is the profit-takers, represented by the heads of great corporations and banks. When the State buys goods for the unemployed, it buys them from the private manufacturers, and that means profits. When the State gives money to the unemployed, the unemployed spend it in the channels of our profit system, and again we are subsidizing private industry. But if the State should put the unemployed to work, they would be entering into competition with private industry. If the unemployed were to raise their own wheat, it would reduce the profits of the great feudal wheat-ranches of our State. If they ground their own grain, it would interfere with the profits of the milling-trust. If they baked their own bread, it would cut the profits of

the baking trust—and all these operations would hurt the bankers who have the bonds of these corporations in their vaults. We are held tight in the grip of a system, which decrees that a million of our citizens shall suffer slow starvation, rather than let the stranglehold of Big Business slip.

"So I say that the first essential of our new political program is a change of mind toward this problem. We must summon the courage to take the wild beast of greed by the beard. We have to say that human lives and human welfare are first. We have to recognize and proclaim the right of all human beings in this State to own or have access to the land and the means of production; the right to labor and produce the necessities of existence for themselves and their loved ones. We have to say it, and mean it, and act upon it, regardless of whatever it may do to any vested right of exploitation. Do you agree with me in that statement?"

There was a general assent, and Sinclair continued:

"Very well then, we know what we are going to do: to return the unemployed to the land. That does not mean to dump them out on the desert without tools or training; still less does it mean to turn them over to real estate speculators. All over California today are thousands of our best ranches which have been sold to the State for taxes. There are counties in which more than 50% of taxes are delinquent. A very slight change in the law will enable the State to keep and utilize the land which it is forced to acquire for taxes. Another law would enable the State to bid for and acquire land sold under foreclosure proceedings. For a very small outlay we can have the best agricultural land in the State, already under cultivation and equipped with machinery for operation.

"My proposition is that we establish land colonies for the unemployed. These colonies will be run by the State under expert supervision. We have two kinds of agriculture in California at present: small-scale individualist ranching, in which the ranchers are in bondage to the banks, and large-scale operations, in which great land corporations work Chinese, Japanese, Hindus, Filipinos, Mexicans, and other kinds of foreigners, under what amounts to peonage. I propose a third kind of agriculture. The State will set up colonies managed by trained men. It will provide adequate housing for workers, co-operative kitchens and cafeterias, and rooms for social purposes. It will guarantee a living at the outset, and when the colonies have got fairly under way, it will guarantee comfort. It will offer to every unemployed man and woman in the State a chance to become completely self-supporting. Can you approve that program?"

Said the doctor: "The only objection I see is that many

people have lost contact with the land; if we put them back on it they won't know what to do."

"The answer is that great numbers of agricultural workers are now out of work, and also many ranchers are losing their land. Moreover, modern large-scale farming, such as we have on our bean, wheat, and rice ranches, is largely a proposition for mechanics. Again, we do not have to assume that all our colonies will be remote from cities and towns. There are tracts of valuable land held by speculators on the outskirts of all our cities, and here we can have our scientific horticulture, and grow for our own use every kind of vegetable and fruit. There are 25,000 useful and beautiful plants that can be grown in California.

"Do not assume that our land colonies will be bare and unattractive. If you elect a true Christian like myself as Governor, we shall remember that 'Man does not live by bread alone.' Every land colony will become a cultural center, with a branch library, a motion picture theatre, a lecture hall where we can explain the principles of co-operation. Our present class system takes it for granted that the workers have to live in squalid surroundings and be ignorant and dirty. If I am Governor of California, every man, woman and child will have opportunities of self-development, not merely physical but intellectual, moral and æsthetic. Does that meet your objections?"

"Partly," said the doctor. "But you have to provide for other kinds of unemployment besides that of farm-workers."

"Certainly. If a man knows how to make shoes or shirts or clothing, it would be foolish to put him on the land. Let him stay in the city where he has a home, and produce for the land-workers who grow his food. In our State at the present time are thousands of factories which are idle, or half idle, and we shall immediately acquire them and start them up. A simple enabling act by the Legislature would give us the right to do this. Many factories are in the hands of the bankers who do not know what to do with them and would be glad to sell them for the amount of the bonds. We shall need a public corporation to handle our land colony development and another to handle our industrial production.

"Let us begin with the absolute necessities, of course. Let us take laundries, bakeries, canneries, clothing and shoe factories, cement plants, brick-yards, lumber-yards. Let us construct a complete industrial system, a new and self-maintaining world for our unemployed, in which they will live, having as few dealings as possible with our present world of speculators and exploiters. Every land colony will have its store where the products of the factory are sold. Every factory will have its kitchen and cafeteria,

and its market where the products of the land are sold. Our system will maintain a trucking service to take the products of the cities to the land colonies and bring the food products to the factories. No middleman will get a finger into our pie."

Said Mr. J. A. McHenry, a realtor: "It seems to me that you will want a separate money system for such an organization. That is what I am interested in, having believed all my life in a commodity dollar."

"That is what we shall have in fact. Our workers will be paid mainly in scrip, which will be good for all the products of the system at prices based upon cost. By this means the unemployed will be providing themselves with all the necessities of life, and our taxpayers will escape the burden which is breaking their backs."

"Will you permit the products of the system to be sold outside the system?" asked Mr. Abbott, another realtor.

"You touch on a crucial point there," said Sinclair, "because that would be permitting the system to enter into competition with private producers, not merely for the support of the unemployed but for the making of profits. It seems to me that at the outset we will have our hands full to produce enough for the million unemployed and dependents of unemployed in our State. As a matter of fact, of course, we shall be undermining private industry, by withdrawing the hundred million dollars a year which the State is now paying the unemployed, and which they are spending for goods. The present system is like a row of tin soldiers: when you permit the first to fall, he knocks down the second, which in turn knocks down the third. That is the terror which confronts Big Business today, and the reason we see the Government propping up the railroads, propping up the insurance companies, propping up banks—not daring to let anything fail, until the whole thing fails at once."

Mr. Homer W. Sale, a law student, asked how this plan would be financed, and the answer was: "It appears that there are Federal banking laws, passed in the interest of the money trust, to discourage States from engaging in banking. I propose that the State of California shall issue bonds of denominations as low as ten dollars, these bonds to bear low interest; some to be long term bonds, others to be redeemable at thirty days notice. This would practically be the same thing as a public savings bank, and the bonds would serve as a State currency. My campaign for office will be a crusade to persuade the people to withdraw their savings from private banks, and turn them over to the State to be used for the development of a State system of industrial production. 'Lend your money to California and not to the bankers; let

your money work for you and not against you.' It would not be very long, I think, before the private bankers would be begging the State to buy their beautiful marble palaces at cost, and we should put an end to the private control of credit, which is the tap-root of our troubles. Could the Democratic party of California be won to that program?"

"What I think," said Mr. Stevenson, "is that every intelligent person in the State would join the Democratic party to help put that program across. I will undertake to carry it to our party leaders, and tell them that if they oppose it, they will surely lose some Democratic Congressmen in 1934."

Said Sinclair: "I take it that we are agreed that the cause of our present depression is the concentration of wealth in the hands of a small class. Income is going to be redistributed in the United States by one of two methods, either by legal enactments or by violent revolution; and we have not much longer in which to make the choice. I do not need to point out to you the situation today. We have passed a sales tax which puts the burden of the support of the State upon the poor. Governor Rolph signed that bill and vetoed the income tax bill. He is beginning to realize what a blunder he made, and is trying to put the blame off on others."

Said the doctor: "He is going to be the worst beaten Governor in the history of California."

"If I beat him, I will set out to kill the sales tax and put back the income tax at a figure which will take at least 30% of all incomes beyond $50,000. They take that much in England. The State inheritance tax will be raised so that any person who inherits more than $50,000 will pay 50% to the State."

"They tell us that will drive capital out of the State," said Mrs. Shaw.

"It will drive money out, of course, but it won't drive the land out and it won't drive the factories out, and we do not have to worry about the cash, because if we put our people at productive labor they will soon create plenty of wealth in California, and we can cheerfully do without the parasites and speculators. When word goes over the country what we are up to, there will be tens of thousands of able-bodied workers coming in our direction, and under the new system we can put them to work and they will add to our wealth and taxing power. When we make the unemployed self-supporting, we no longer have to be afraid of them.

"Of course, for the starting of our land colonies we shall need a great deal of money. If we issue bonds, we have to provide for the interest and a sinking fund. Let us reform our tax system, and put the burden of supporting the State upon those who can

afford to carry it. I propose that all homes assessed at less than $3000 shall be exempt from taxation. Anybody who lives in that poor a home in these times needs help and not taxing. Homes of from $3000 to $5000 pay a normal rate, and for each additional $5000 we add one-half of one per cent. That means that if you live in a $100,000 home you will pay a tax of about 11%, and if you don't care to pay that, the State will take over your mansion and turn it into a public institution for orphan children, or for the aged, or for those who have acquired tuberculosis by slaving twelve hours a day in a department store or a restaurant kitchen. There should be a State tax of 10% on all idle and unused land. That will put the speculators out of business, and provide us with the land we need for our colonies, and with sites for our factories and workers' homes. In addition, we shall boost the tax on corporation profits and on public utilities. From these sources we will get money for old age pensions, and pensions for the support of widows and orphans and the sick and incapacitated. Thus, you see, our program is completed, and there can be no more poverty in California."

A State employee who could not let his name be used discussed the proposition of State pensions, hoping that the system would be better than that now prevailing, under which payments by the State depend very largely upon political "pull" and graft. The answer was that pensions would go to all needy persons who could establish that they were over sixty years of age and had lived for the past three years in the State.

"That is the Two-Year Plan for California," said Sinclair. "If I am your candidate for Governor it will be for the purpose of putting that across. Let me make plain that being Governor means nothing to me personally. I do not need fame; I get that by writing books, which are being translated into some fifty languages all over the world. I do not need money, for during these years of depression I have been able to earn somewhat more with my pen than the State of California pays to its Governor. But I cannot enjoy the comforts of home, and the freedom of work and recreation which I have earned, while I know there are millions of others around me suffering for lack of the common necessities. That is why I am here tonight—to find out what is the reaction of a group of Democratic party workers to this Plan."

There was general discussion, during which every person in the room expressed complete approval. Said Sinclair: "This is surprising to me, and gratifying. I hope that the rest of our Democratic voters are as alert. I am ready to go ahead with you. I repeat the slogan for our campaign:

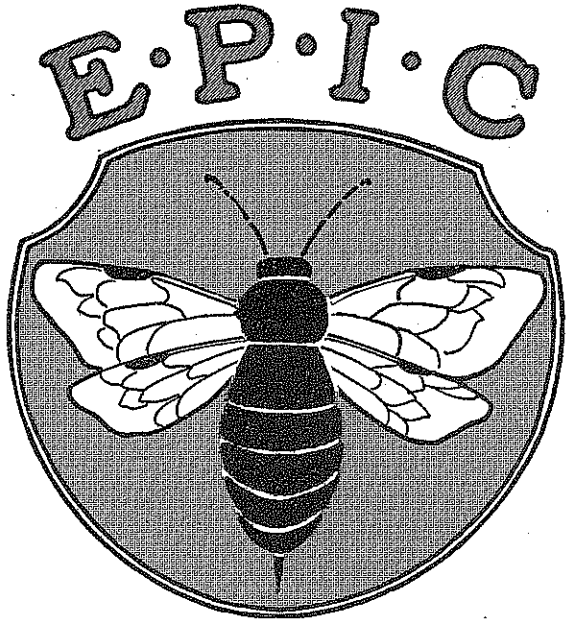
"END POVERTY IN CALIFORNIA."

It was pointed out that the initials of these words spell "EPIC." "All right," said Sinclair, "we have NIRA for the Nation; let us have EPIC for the State. Our people are signing up under the blue eagle, or the blue hawk as General Johnson wanted it to be called. I personally can get up no enthusiasm for any kind of bird of prey. I think we should take for our emblem something expressive of useful labor."

Some one suggested "the little brown hen, which lays an egg a day." Another suggested "the busy bee."

"I like the bee," said Sinclair; "he not only works hard but has means to defend himself and is willing to use them on behalf of his young. I hope we can awaken as much energy in the voters of California, and I suggest that the emblem of EPIC shall be a Golden Bee with the motto: 'I produce, I defend.'"

Here is the emblem as drawn by Rob Wagner, editor of "Script," and a tireless friend of social justice.



CHAPTER II

The First Steps

On September 1, Upton Sinclair changed his registration from Socialist to Democratic.

The California law provides that a voter may state his party affiliation. If he so states, he is considered a member of that party. The naming of the candidates for office is not left to party conventions but is decided by the registered party members at a primary election held in August. Those who have stated their party affiliation vote at the primaries for candidates of that party. Any voter may appear as a candidate upon the primary ballot, upon presentation of a petition signed by one hundred or more members of a party. There are usually a number of names on the primary ballot, and the person who receives the highest number of votes becomes the party's candidate at the general election in November.

Sinclair consulted a number of his Socialist friends concerning his proposed new course. For the most part they opposed it; the Socialists would consider he had gone back on his convictions, possibly that he had fallen victim to personal ambitions. His answer was that he hoped the Socialists would do him the honor to study his plan. He said: "For thirty years I have been content to be a member of a small political sect, persuading myself that it would grow. I ran for Senator in 1922 and got 50,323 votes; I ran for Governor in 1930 and got 50,480; and I persuaded myself that that was progress.

"I found comfort in the idea that we had a long time in which to explain our ideals to the American people. But now I have seen the horror which has come in Germany, and I realize that the American Socialist party wouldn't make one good-sized bite for American Big Business, when it gets to the biting stage. We have only a year or so in which to save ourselves, and save our country. The breakdown of our social system is so swift, the crisis will be so desperate when it comes—in short, we have to find some way to reach the people at once, the great mass of the people, the Democrats and Republicans, and make them understand what is happening to them, and what they have to do about it.

"I remind you that in 1924 the Socialist party of America endorsed the nomination of Robert M. LaFollette for President of the United States, and conducted a campaign in which LaFollette got more than four million votes. The party took that action, not because LaFollette was a Socialist, but because there

was a mass movement in that direction, and they took the opportunity to educate the Progressives in their ideas. Well, there is going to be a similar mass movement in the State of California this year. The movement is going to apply the principles of Democracy, or rule by the people, to business and industrial affairs. The Socialist party will decide for itself what is the wisest attitude for it to take to a people's movement to end poverty in California.

"I am making an appeal to all citizens of the State, to register as members of the Democratic party, and to name me candidate of that party, and thus make possible the EPIC campaign. I shall make no special appeal to Socialists to follow this course; but on the other hand I shall make no special appeal to them *not* to follow it. Every voter in the State will decide his or her own best procedure. Of course if the Socialist party as an organization chooses to endorse my candidacy, I shall accept the endorsement gladly. The same statement applies to the Republican party, the Progressive party, or any other."

In the first stages of working out his program, Sinclair consulted two lawyers, John Beardsley, a Democrat, who had been candidate for Superior Court judge, and John C. Packard, a Socialist. For more than ten years these two men had been active in the work of the Civil Liberties Union, defending the American principles of freedom of speech and opinion against attacks by police and public officials under the influence of and often in the pay of the Better America Federation. It is a fixed policy of the reactionary elements in the State to list the American Civil Liberties Union as a "Communist" organization; a procedure made easy by the fact that it is generally the Communists who are deprived of their civil liberties, and so have to be defended. It is no easy matter to explain to the average citizen the old-time principle: "I abhor every word you say but I will defend with my life your right to say it."

After several conferences with these two lawyers, the EPIC program was set forth as follows:

The Legislature will create a public body to establish and conduct land colonies. The act will be known as the California Land Colonies Act, and the body will be the California Authority for Land (the CAL). It will be empowered to exercise the right of eminent domain and condemn land required for colony purposes. It will be authorized to take over all land which has been sold or may in future be sold for taxes, whether by cities or by counties, and to retain this land and put it to use. It will be authorized to bid for land sold under foreclosure proceedings. It will establish colonies, erect buildings, conduct all business operations, and

make regulations for the governing of the colonies. It will be authorized to open stores for its members, and conduct a merchandising business.

The same principles apply to the acquiring of factories and production plants. This act will be the California Production Act, and the public body the California Authority for Production (the CAP). This body will be authorized to acquire factories by condemnation proceedings, to purchase those sold at foreclosure sales, and put these plants to productive use; to purchase raw materials and sell the finished products; to erect buildings, and make regulations for the governing of the factories; to open stores for its members and conduct a regular merchandising business.

The act for the financing of these undertakings will be known as the California Money Act, and the public body will be the California Authority for Money (the CAM): the three agencies for the realizing of EPIC thus being the CAL, the CAP, and the CAM.

The CAM will be authorized to issue scrip for the purposes of both CAL and CAP. These bodies will pay scrip for services rendered, and for goods purchased from one another, and for the handling and distributing of goods. The CAM will also be authorized to issue bonds to the amount of three hundred million dollars to finance the operations of CAL and CAP. These bonds will be sold directly to the people without commissions to any bankers, and CAM will establish an educational department for the purpose of explaining the value and importance of the bonds to the public. The issues will be of denominations of from ten dollars to one thousand, and of two kinds, long term bonds and those redeemable upon thirty days' notice. The latter will constitute in effect a state savings bank, a redemption fund being provided.

The remainder of the legislative program of EPIC is as follows:

An act of the Legislature repealing the present sales tax.

An act of the Legislature providing for a State income tax, beginning with incomes of $5000 and steeply graduated until incomes of $50,000 pay 30% tax.

An increase in the State inheritance tax, steeply graduated and applying to all properties in the State regardless of where the owner may reside. This law will take for the State 50% of all money above $50,000 bequeathed *to* an individual and 50% of all money above $250,000 bequeathed *by* an individual.

A law increasing the taxes on public utility corporations according to the value of the franchise.

A constitutional amendment revising the tax code of the State and providing that cities and counties shall exempt from taxation all homes occupied by the owners, and ranches cultivated by the owners, when the assessed value of such homes and ranches is less than $3000. Assessments between $3000 and $5000 will pay a normal tax, as at present, and above $5000 there will be an increase of one-half of one per cent for each $5000 of additional assessed valuation. Similar provisions will be made for graduated taxes upon all other real property.

A constitutional amendment providing for a State land tax of 10% upon all unimproved building land and all agricultural land which is not under cultivation. The enabling act providing for this tax will contain exact and careful provisions to avoid evasion. The law will specify what constitutes cultivation, and will provide that crops must not merely be planted but must be harvested and used or sold. Improvements must bear a certain relation to the assessed valuation of the building sites. A valuable city lot will not be considered to be improved because a shack is hurriedly erected upon it, nor will thousands of acres of land be kept out of productive use because a million-dollar palace occupies a small part.

A law providing for the payment of a pension of $50 per month to every person over sixty years of age who is in need, and who has lived in the State of California three years prior to the date of the coming into effect of the law.

A law providing for the payment of $50 per month to all needy persons who are blind, or who by medical examination are proved to be physically unable to earn a living; these persons also having been residents of the State for three years.

A pension of $50 per month to all widowed women who have dependent children; if the children are more than two in number, the pension to be increased by $25 per month for each additional child. These also to have been residents for three years.

An outline of the above program was submitted to a number of experts for criticism as to its economic, legal, and political soundness, and the program was revised to meet objections which seemed well based. The publisher of a Hollywood newspaper wrote saying that the plan could not be carried out because "We haven't the leadership in California to obtain an appropriation of public funds. If it depends upon the sale of bonds to the public, there will be no buyers. . . . I should like to see a pension program worked out, but with the present attitude of the voters towards anything involving taxes, I don't see the slightest chance. I am inclined to think that from now on we must look to our national

government for anything of a forward nature. I am a pessimist about State plans."

To this Sinclair replied: "My plan proposes to try to divide the voters into two classes—those who would benefit by the program and those who would lose by it. The former outnumber the latter ten to one, so it is a question of whether we can get the people to realize their own interests. I seek the votes of all the unemployed; of owners of homes and ranches of less than $3000 assessed value; of all who would benefit by old age and widows' pensions. You say, 'From now on we must look to our national government for anything of a forward nature.' Well, it seems to me an un-American idea that we should trust our affairs to the management of people three thousand miles away from us. I think that the people of California ought to be waked up to attend to their own business. If we do not do it, we will have such a top-heavy bureaucracy that our industrial machinery will stop altogether. The Russians tried it and they are now finding that they have to decentralize."

The Plan was incorporated in a book which Sinclair published as a campaign program, both for the primaries and the election. The first edition went to press in October of 1933, and at that time the failure of NRA was easy to foresee. The New York "Times" business index, which had stood at 60 in March, and had gone up to nearly 100 in July, had dropped to 78. This meant another collapse of business near at hand. The President was trying the futile Hoover idea, of extending bank credit to business men who had no customers. At the same time he announced that the Government would spend $330,000,000 on direct relief to the people; which meant that the nation was traveling the same road as Los Angeles County—to bankruptcy. The people would be fed, but they would not be allowed to grow their own food. On the contrary, farmers would be paid to destroy food! Manifestly, it could be only a few weeks before the President would be forced to start inflation, to reduce the amount of the debts both public and private.

The Book was soon distributed widely. The leading newspapers said little about it—which was according to expectation. This was a peoples' campaign; it appealed to the conscience and intelligence of the rank and file voters. The Book circulated because individual citizens who read it ordered more copies and passed them on, and took the trouble to urge their friends to read it. This underground spreading of the Book added greatly to Sinclair's already large mail; and to one of his correspondents he wrote:

"I have tried to make EPIC plain in the Book and to answer

all questions there. The task is now up to you. Circulate the Book. Organize groups to study it. Do not ask me to do anything more than this for the present. Above all, do not ask me to put in any more measures or to attack any more problems. EPIC is enough for one year of campaigning and for four years of any governor's administration. I hope to be able to put it all through in the first year, and then we shall see how it works and be guided accordingly. If I see that more can be done I will propose it to the people and ask their approval. But all that I promise now is EPIC—every detail of that is a separate oath. If I am elected I will get into action like a football team at the moment of the kick-off. I will fight for it like a cage full of wildcats."

The first step toward educating the public was to have a propaganda group organized in every neighborhood in the State. That cost no money, because a copy of the Book was all that was needed; it took the time and enthusiasm of persons who had had enough of poverty and wanted to end it. These persons began meeting in homes and school-houses, and many of them wanted Upton Sinclair to come and talk to them. He explained that he was only one person, and that he had the circulating of the Book to attend to, and mail to answer three times every day. He asked the friends of EPIC to understand at the outset that he would do public speaking only on crucial occasions. He was a writer, not an orator; the art of printing was a later and more important invention than oratory, and a more effective way of spreading ideas among six and one-half million people scattered over a hundred and fifty-eight thousand square miles of land.

It was necessary to have study clubs and organizations in every neighborhood, and it was necessary also to have a "slate," with a candidate for every office, both state and local. To friends and advisers in the Democratic party Sinclair said: "I do not know to what extent I can count upon the party machine. I am a newcomer, and if they fear me, I cannot blame them. Of course if the present officials of the party take up the EPIC plan and work for it, I will be delighted; but it is too much to expect that all of them should share our convictions. Therefore I have to make plain my attitude—that Plan comes first and Party comes second. Those who do not care to work for EPIC will quickly find themselves uncomfortable, and will change over to the party of Hoover and Mellon, Rockefeller and Morgan.

"It would be a waste of my time and the people's votes to elect me Governor, and at the same time elect a Legislature which would not support the Plan, and to elect other State or County officials who would not work to carry out the Plan.

Therefore I call upon all friends of progress in every corner of our State to flock to the standard of the Democratic party, and make certain that the machinery of the party is turned to the service of the people. Let us have EPIC committees in every district, and let each committee make a list of the offices which have to be filled at the next election, and prepare a list of men and women who are willing to stand as candidates for these offices at the Democratic primaries: persons who (1) have the time and are willing to give it; who (2) have the intelligence and are willing to use it; and who (3) have the character to stand against the manifold temptations of political office today.

"Bear in mind that there will be no limit to the money which will be poured out to defeat this plan. Every kind of bribery will be used, not merely the crude payment of cash, but 'loans' from banks and the 'carrying' of stocks; promises of political promotion, business favors, contracts, and that more subtle form of corruption which I have called 'the dress suit bribe.' You will recall the wholesale oil thieves of ten years ago, and how one of them was tried for his crimes, and one of the jurors boasted that he was going to have 'an automobile a block long.' Well, the man who will sell out EPIC can have a chain of automobiles all the way across California. All this you must know in advance, and take measures against it. Choose officials whom you can trust, and after you have elected them trust them, but at the same time watch them, and be ready to turn them out at the first minute they show signs of betrayal.

"There will be one test, a very simple one. Make sure that every person you nominate understands the EPIC program and agrees in writing to support it; make him take the pledge and repeat it at every stage of the campaign. Do not have it possible for anyone to say that he came in through a misunderstanding, and that after consultation with his banker or his lawyer or his boss, he has realized that the plan is dangerous and un-American. Later, when the various measures of EPIC come up for action, see that every official keeps his pledge, and the moment he makes a wrong speech or casts a wrong vote, start a recall on him and put him out.

"We say that we believe in Democracy. Why else do we join a Democratic party? If we believe, we must prove our faith. We, the people of California, will have our own organization and will run it. We will choose our own representatives, and then see to it that they carry out our orders. If we cannot have our way in a crisis such as this, then Democracy is a dead horse, and we had better call in a Hitler or Mussolini to run our State. I could name the great bankers of San Francisco and Los Angeles

who would find a man for the job, and put up the money to start him."

One of Sinclair's first actions after the printing of the Book was to send a copy to every elected official in the State and ask each one to state his attitude toward the Plan. Most of these political persons thought it wiser not to reply; a small number declared their approval and their willingness to work for the Plan. As rapidly as the EPIC committees were formed in all parts of the State, these groups set out to interview their public officials and obtain their written endorsements. Officials who endorsed were given EPIC support for re-election, unless their conduct in office had been such as to cast doubt upon their good faith. It was the program of EPIC to disregard previous party affiliations in their selections of candidates. The sole tests were integrity, intelligence and loyalty to EPIC. In a letter to a Democratic official Sinclair wrote:

"Every true citizen must agree that political partizanship is out of place in this crisis. We need all the brains and all the honesty in our State to save our people, and we must have an organization of all the talents. We want to name Democrats, Progressive Republicans and Socialists on our ticket, exactly as President Roosevelt has taken them into the 'brain trust' which is guiding our national affairs."

The question of funds for the campaign had come up at the first conference. One man had stated that he knew of two checks of $50,000 each which had been deposited in one of the great banks of Los Angeles to finance the campaigns of candidates for the Republican nomination. He could name the persons who were authorized to draw upon these funds. He knew one candidate who intended to spend $150,000 to obtain the Republican nomination for himself. The leading candidates of the Democratic party were also men of great personal wealth, and it would be a difficult task to carry either of the party primaries without large campaign funds. "Most of the people who in former times were willing to work for the love of it are now in a position where they are obliged to earn their livings and cannot work without pay."

To this Mrs. Shaw replied that she knew many women who would work for EPIC without pay. Sinclair then stated his own position as follows:

"The people must understand that I have no money except what I earn by my writing. I am accustomed to give away many thousands of my books every year. Last year, for example, I gave an edition of 100,000 copies of 'Letters to Judd.' At the present time I have a share in the profits of a motion picture,

'Thunder Over Mexico,' and if this picture interests the public, I may be able to devote all my time to EPIC. In any case, I intend to give this Book; every penny that comes out of it will go to the printing of more copies. For the rest, this campaign has to be waged by volunteers; by voters who will take the EPIC plan and explain it to others, and get neighborhood groups together to study it and work for it, and go from house to house giving the Book or selling it.

"I do not assume that the American people have any right to expect the plutocracy to advance funds for its own overthrow. Either the idea of Democracy is a delusion, or the people will be sufficiently interested in their own rights to fight for them and maintain them. If we end poverty in California, it must be by the efforts of the poor; we will get only such help from the rich as idealism and self-sacrifice inspire. Of course the EPIC plan will help the rich, for every human being will be happier in a society conducted on the principles of brotherhood and co-operation. But it is hard to make the rich understand that, and those who run the world for the rich are of the hard-boiled, unscrupulous type who do not put up political campaign funds unless they know they are going to get cash returns many times multiplied. You may be sure that such men will raise the biggest fund ever raised in the State of California if they think it necessary to defeat Upton Sinclair. Against the money of these men of greed, you have to match your faith, heroism, and enlightened civic spirit."

CHAPTER III

The Primaries

The winter of 1933-34 was the most trying the American people had ever known. The NRA system of restricting hours of labor and fixing wages while permitting retail prices to increase without restriction brought its inevitable consequences. The workers were unable to buy what they had produced and production began another swift decline. The only remedy was inflation—actual inflation, not merely the promise of it which had been sufficient during the summer of 1933. The effect of inflation was

to render the minimum wage program meaningless, because a continual rise in prices meant a continual cutting of real wages. The people who had been existing for four years upon their savings no longer had any reserves, and every price increase was immediately felt in a reduction of living standards.

The nation seemed to be heading toward another collapse, and this caused greater interest in the EPIC program, not only in California but throughout the country. The forming of EPIC groups continued and several editions of the Book were printed. The local committees became more insistent in their demands that candidates should declare for EPIC, and uneasiness spread among the old-time party leaders. They realized that this was not a freak movement but a revolt; it was Democracy in fact, and not merely in name.

Many of the County Central Committees gave their endorsement to Sinclair's candidacy, but as political affairs stood, these bodies had little control. The Democratic party, like the Republican, was run by a group of insiders, who held their power because they were in position to put up the party funds, or to raise these funds among their backers. This group controlled an enormously valuable Federal patronage, which is what keeps political machinery moving. And now this group of insiders contemplated the possibility of having the control of their party taken away from them.

One of the leading Democratic statesmen sought a conference with Upton Sinclair. Sinclair knew this gentleman and had visited his home, so there was no difficulty about the meeting. The statesman was urbane and accustomed to pleasing all kinds of men. He tactfully explained that the Democratic party was an old institution with an honorable historical record, and that those who had given their lives to building it naturally felt a certain proprietary interest, and considered that they knew how best to guide its affairs.

Sinclair answered that he felt a natural embarrassment at having to butt in upon the affairs of these Democratic leaders; but this was a crisis, and the extreme need of the people justified extreme measures to save the Democratic system.

The statesman said that he considered Sinclair's views to be many of them admirable, and no doubt in the course of time they would nearly all be adopted; but in political affairs it is necessary to proceed cautiously and not be too drastic in one's demands.

Sinclair said that he had considered that, but the program seemed to him what the times required.

The statesman intimated that if EPIC would be willing to modify its proposals somewhat, and separate them into a set of

immediate demands and a set of principles for the future, it might be possible to accomplish something of great public benefit. But the consequence of insisting upon having everything at once would result in such extreme opposition that the plan would fail entirely.

Sinclair answered that he had faced that possibility; he believed the crisis was going to get worse, not better, and there was no remedy under the present system. If the EPIC plan were defeated, the only outcome would be a violent revolution, in which the propertied classes would lose far more than they stood to lose under EPIC. For that reason Sinclair had resolved to take his stand on this platform and not modify it under any circumstances.

The statesman was sad, but managed to keep smiling. He supposed it was the process of life; the old were continually seeing themselves passed over by the young, and were always calling the young extremists. He could not wish Sinclair success, and would be forced to oppose him, but of course he would do so by honorable means and with fair arguments.

Sinclair answered that he was glad to hear this. He had scrupulously avoided personalities in his own campaign. He had refrained from seeking interviews with any of the Democratic leaders, because he did not wish to ask any favors, nor to put any personal pressure on anyone. EPIC would speak for itself, and those who supported it would do so for their own sake and not for the sake of Sinclair.

The gentleman whom the party leaders had selected as candidate for Governor was a millionaire oil operator who had held several important public posts. He soon began to show more realization of the crisis, and in his public statements advocated several measures which suggested that the news about EPIC had reached him. Sinclair stated he did not mind this, having always believed that the business of persons with ideas is to have them appropriated.

The leaders continued to obey the laws of good breeding, but the underground campaign followed the usual custom. In San Francisco a leaflet was circulated, containing sentences from "The Profits of Religion," in which Sinclair had opposed the Catholic Church. San Francisco was a strong Catholic city and the Irish especially were active Democrats. Sinclair, answering this attack, said:

"There are two kinds of Catholics in California—those who want to end poverty and those who want to continue it. All the former group will vote for EPIC, because there is no other way to accomplish what they want. The second group of Catholics

will vote against EPIC. I point out that this is not a campaign to interfere with any church, or to interfere with any man's religion, or to change any man's ideas about religion. Those who drag in religious issues are merely trying to distract attention.

"What I have done in my books is to show how the religion of Jesus has been used by ruling classes at various times in history to keep themselves in power and to keep the poor in subjection. I say that this is a betrayal of Jesus, who drove the moneychangers out of the temple with whips—a program more extreme than EPIC proposes; we are willing to use legislative enactments. I notice that my enemies do not quote the last chapters of 'The Profits of Religion,' in which I have set forth my reverence for the personality of Jesus and my admiration for his teachings. I have quoted in that book some verses which sum up the fate of Jesus in our modern plutocratic world:

They have taken the tomb of our Comrade Christ—
  Infidel hordes that believe not in man;
Stable and stall for his birth sufficed,
  But his tomb is built on a kingly plan.
They have hedged him round with pomp and parade,
  They have buried him deep under steel and stone—
But we come leading the great Crusade
  To give our Comrade back to his own.

There were rumors circulated among the Christian Scientists that Upton Sinclair did not believe in animal magnetism, and among the Mormons that he did not believe the revelation of Joseph Smith. To such reports he made the same answer: "There are Christian Scientists and Mormons who desire to end poverty, and there are Christian Scientists and Mormons who desire to continue poverty. The former will vote for EPIC, and the latter against it. There is no other issue in this campaign."

Also there began to be dark rumors circulated among the ladies' clubs, that the candidate had divorced his first wife. In reply to this he said:

"Not long ago I received a letter from an inmate of San Quentin, informing me that he had taken a vote among his fellows, as to who was the frankest writer in the world, and there had been twenty-six votes for Upton Sinclair against six votes for his nearest rival. This being the case, it is easy for club ladies to satisfy themselves concerning my private life. Let them read my autobiography, 'American Outpost,' or the stories in 'The Brass Check,' which they will find a highly educational book."

Another trap was the Prohibition issue. Both Wets and Drys demanded to know the attitude of EPIC on liquor, and with the

approval of the executive committee of EPIC Sinclair made a statement as follows:

"The people of California have declared their will on the subject of the Eighteenth Amendment and the liquor question. As a Democrat I believe in the right of the majority of the people to decide their own affairs, and I therefore consider that question settled. Personally I have always been a Dry both in theory and in practice. I have set forth my views in 'The Wet Parade.' I have not changed my views nor abandoned the right to express them. But so far as our political affairs are concerned, the question is not an issue. We are in the midst of a desperate economic crisis, and I have pledged myself to the EPIC plan, and intend to advocate that plan and stick to it and not permit myself to be diverted from it until the job is done. That is my answer to both Wets and Drys, as well as to the advocates of all other causes and all other legislation whatsoever."

Most persistent of all was the effort to connect the candidate with Moscow. EPIC was part of the Communist camouflage, said the reactionaries. Sinclair had boasted of the extent to which his books were read in Russia; he was making money out of a moving picture made by a Russian director; he was really a Russian Jew born in Riga and his name had been Sinklerovitch; he was on the payroll of the Third International, and had a campaign fund of a hundred thousand dollars per month direct from Stalin. These statements appeared in the secret bulletins sent out by the Better America Federation, and the Daughters of No More American Revolutions believed them. There was even an attempt made to have the American Legion break up EPIC meetings, but this did not get very far because so many of the Legionnaires were out of jobs, and had joined the local EPIC committees.

Discussing this subject, Sinclair said: "The Russians solved their problem in their own way. Maybe it was the only way that would have worked in Russia. Anyhow, they are doing their job, and I have followed their experiments with deep interest. But the charge that I have taken my ideas from them would be more true if it were turned about. I began advocating these ideas more than thirty years ago, and my novel, 'The Jungle,' was translated into Russian in the year 1906, and was a best-seller in the empire of the tsar. The last chapters in that novel contain everything in EPIC and more, and it seems reasonable to assume that some Russians learned something from me.

"We have an American problem and we are going to solve it in our own way. If you think I am carrying out the purposes

of the American Communists, you should read what their newspapers say about EPIC. I believe in Democracy and they repudiate it. I believe that we can abolish poverty and do away with exploiting classes by peaceful means under our present Constitution; whereas the Communists are certain that revolution and dictatorship of the proletariat are necessary. If our propertied classes were wise they would take EPIC as the alternative to Communism. If EPIC fails, the Communists will do the job. But do not worry, for EPIC is not going to fail."

To a writer for a New York magazine who asked how he explained the rapid growth of the movement, Sinclair said: "The voters know that I mean what I say; and they observe that my rivals say nothing worth meaning."

Upton Sinclair was fortunate in having a wife who was a partner in his affairs. She made no speeches, but listened to her husband's, and saved him from the common misfortune of those in high office—that they hear only favorable opinions. "M. C. S." talked with his friends, and they told her what they would not tell him. She met those who sought his favor, and judged them with a quick intuition which in twenty years of married life had never erred. She protected him from the effects of his weakness in practical affairs, a tendency to take individuals at their own valuation. "She is your best protection," said Sinclair to the EPIC workers.

The candidate made a tour of the State to meet the EPIC committees in various places, and a few large meetings were held. Local speakers explained the plan to their neighbors, and thousands of voters enrolled, and volunteer workers made house-to-house campaigns. Many clergymen endorsed the plan, and opened their churches to its meetings. Also, there were organizations which found their aims embodied in EPIC; the Technocracy groups, the Bellamy clubs, and the League for Independent Political Action. This last organization was actively fostering a new party throughout the country; but its members realized that here was a chance of capturing one of the old parties and using it for the people's cause.

In Los Angeles, Manchester Boddy had committed his paper, the "Illustrated Daily News," to a program of public enlightenment which had changed the intellectual tone of the city. Sinclair did not ask Boddy to support EPIC, but asked him to print the news about it whenever it had news value, and that was done. Sinclair frequently commended the paper in his speeches, and profited from its reports about the local situation.

In San Francisco his friend, Fremont Older, hero of many an old-time battle, could not commit his paper, owned by Hearst,

to EPIC, but Older frequently published the news. The same was true of the San Francisco "News," and of several smaller papers throughout the State. In Stockton, L. D. Beckwith, single-taxer, had a little weekly, called "No Taxes," which had kept public spirit alive in that community. Other small papers came forward; the labor press opened its columns; and a number of clergymen used their church bulletins as a means of getting the facts to the people. Once more the saying of Thomas Jefferson was vindicated, that "truth has nothing to fear from error, where reason is left free to combat it."

Toward the close of the primary campaign it became apparent to the politicians that they were facing a genuine uprising of the people. Thousands of men and women of every class had realized the hopelessness of their position in face of continuing depression. Doctors, lawyers, business men read the Book, and saw the light, and cast in their lot with the new movement. Here at last was a way out! All over the State political workers came forward. It was discovered that American citizenship had unsuspected reserves of ability. A political career, which had hitherto been regarded with indifference or active aversion, suddenly became a thing of dignity and meaning. In the face of an advancing Fascism in other parts of the world, Democracy in California asserted itself and set out to prove its worth.

The effects of universal education became apparent throughout the State. An EPIC movement was organized in every one of the colleges and in most of the high schools. These students were too young to vote, but they were not too young to study the program and to agitate it among themselves and their elders. They had awakened to the fact that the existing system no longer offered them a hope. Many of them were staying in college, because there was no place for them in the outside world. They were parasites upon their parents, and independence, a career, and a family were no longer to be won. Many teachers also joined the groups—having sustained salary cuts themselves, and seeing the educational system of the State being crippled.

An admirable provision in the State law grants to citizens the right to use school buildings for purposes of political meetings free of charge, and on this basis thousands of meetings were held and local organizations were formed. The law forbade charging admission to these meetings, but it was permitted to collect "voluntary dues." It was not permitted to sell the Book, but it was permitted to "lend" copies and collect a "deposit." Thousands of copies were thus "loaned," and few were ever returned. They were passed around and read by groups of voters.

Also a special appeal was made to Labor. Sinclair pointed out in the Book how completely Labor was crippled by the existence of a mass of unemployed. It was impossible to win strikes under such circumstances. All through the development of American industry, it had been this reserve of jobless which enabled the bosses to keep wages down—the very condition which had brought on the depression. Also Sinclair pointed out that the NRA granted to the workers the right to organize, and indeed counted upon their organized power to protect the program of increasing wages and reducing hours. When EPIC went through, there would no longer be any unemployed in the State, and then for the first time Labor would be able to demand and receive its full share of increasing production. By this argument the rank and file was won over, and those leaders who had committed themselves to old-line politicians found themselves slipping.

The newspapers reported that great numbers of Republicans were changing their registration to Democratic. It was not difficult to find out the reason for this change, and alarm spread among the financiers of both parties. The Democratic leaders warned the voters that the victory of Sinclair would destroy that party; the great Republican newspapers considered it necessary to give the same warning. They said that Sinclair was not really a Democrat, and they denounced the law which permitted voters of one party to take possession of another party. Sinclair replied that he felt no obligation to be the kind of Democrat which pleased the Republicans papers, and he could not understand why they should be so greatly distressed by the prospect of injury to a rival party.

The campaign managers of EPIC found it necessary to start a mimeograph bulletin which they sent weekly to all workers for the cause. In this they pointed out the signs of unity of the old party leaders, and warned every group that it was necessary to have watchers in each precinct to see that the EPIC ballots were counted. Sinclair warned them to watch out for rumors near the end of the campaign. In the last two or three days the enemy would certainly spread false reports, when it was too late for denials to reach the public.

In the last days two of the Democratic candidates withdrew in favor of the rich oil official. This gentleman announced a new idea which had occurred to him—that it was a burden to the tax-payers to support the unemployed in idleness. The proper solution was to return them to the land, so that they could grow their own food. He advised that this should be done in the way which accorded with American traditions. No

"colonies," or such nonsense; every man should have his own farm—"three acres and liberty." Sinclair pointed out that the candidate had overlooked two important items which the State would have to provide: item one, a mule, and item two, a mortgage. No old-style individualist farmer had been known to get along without both of these.

In the days before the primary election the radio programs and newspapers of both parties were filled with warnings as to the dangers of EPIC. The leading Republican candidate, a former conservative governor, found it for some reason necessary to oppose Sinclair and his plan more frequently than he did his rivals inside his own party. The reason for that, said Sinclair, was that neither the Republican nor the other Democratic candidates had any idea what to do about the crisis; they were all taking the Hoover position, that prosperity was just around the corner, and we must sit down and wait until somebody moved the corner out of the way. In reality it was State bankruptcy that was around the corner, and revolt of the starving masses.

Sinclair did his best to get these warnings to the people, in spite of the newspaper boycott, and the fact that the radio stations for the most part were closed to him. Under the law, he had a right to hire the time, but the law had failed to provide the money. Sinclair said that the radio method of campaigning was specially adapted to our autocratic system, because those who had the money could do the talking, while those who had no money sat and listened, having no chance to answer back or to ask embarrassing questions.

Two days before the election came the incident against which Sinclair had warned the EPIC workers. A report was published that he had withdrawn from the campaign. He had no way to get a denial of this report to the public; he could only count upon the intelligence of the voters. He had put his warning into the Book, and for this reason the trick was without effect. The friends of EPIC went to the polls, and voted for the entire list of EPIC candidates, and the EPIC watchers were on hand to see that the votes were counted. The result was that Sinclair carried the Democratic primary by a plurality of some 25,000 votes; he also carried the Socialist primary, in which he had been filed as a candidate by some of his supporters.

CHAPTER IV

The Election

The news that the Democratic voters of California had committed their party to the EPIC plan caused a sensation throughout the country. It resulted in wide discussion of the plan in the magazines, and the formation of an EPIC Committee for the Nation. A statement endorsing Sinclair for Governor was signed by a hundred leading writers, and college groups were formed everywhere throughout the country to recommend the plan for their cities and states. A group of forward-looking economists endorsed the plan, and letters of support were received from a score of United States senators and some fifty congressmen. The book, "Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox," had been sent by the author to every United States senator and congressman, on account of the book's revelations of the higher piracy of Wall Street. Many of these legislators had written to express their interest, and had made use of the book in the drafting of new legislation.

The endorsements of EPIC came equally from Democrats and Progressive Republicans. A new alignment was taking place throughout the country, cutting squarely across the old parties. Those Democrats who believed in the system of government by Big Business found themselves thinking the same thoughts and speaking the same words as the Republican candidate, who had the backing of Herbert Hoover and the financial support of the great bankers. History saw a repetition of the behavior of the gold standard Democrats of 1896. In California of 1934 there could be only two parties, those who wished to abolish poverty and those who wished to maintain it. Sinclair said:

"EPIC has never asked for the support of the bankers, nor of the great captains of industry, nor of the politicians who have served them so faithfully and so long. Our program was carefully drawn to separate the State into two parties. We ask for the vote of every home-owner and ranch-owner in California whose property is assessed at less than $3000. We offer such persons exemption from all taxes. To home-owners and ranchers whose property is valued at $10,000 or less, we give the assurance that they will pay no more tax than they are paying at present. We ask for the votes of every person in California who has suffered from the infamous sales tax, a trick device to take the pennies of the poor without their knowing it. We ask for the vote of all unemployed men and women in the State of California. There are close to a million of these, and we

offer them decent jobs which will pay them a living at once, and comfort very shortly. We ask for the votes of all relatives of unemployed persons—mothers, wives, sons, daughters, sisters and brothers and uncles and aunts—because when any member of a family is out of a job, all the members suffer, either through being deprived of necessities, or through having to part with their savings. We ask for the votes of all persons in California over the age of sixty who are dependent upon their labor or upon charity for their living. There are close to half a million of these. We ask for the votes of all widowed mothers, and of the blind and helpless, promising them the relief which a civilized society owes them. Finally, we ask for the votes of all men and women of the well-to-do class who are capable of looking beyond their own pocket-books, and thinking about the welfare of the community as a whole; who would be happier with comfort and safety in a just world than they are with luxury in a world of parasitism, greed, and strife.

"These various elements constitute 95% of our voters, and it is purely a question of getting them to understand their true interests. That is the one task; it has always been the task, since the clever few first succeeded in harnessing the many to their service."

It is usually considered that party loyalty requires a candidate to support all the ticket of his party. But Sinclair reminded all of his statement that the Plan came first. The EPIC Committee requested every candidate for office in the State to declare in writing his support of the Plan. Some Democrats declined to pledge unqualified support, and in such cases the EPIC Committee endorsed a candidate of the Republicans or the Socialists who did pledge support. In cases where no candidate for the office supported EPIC, steps were taken to nominate an independent candidate, by obtaining signatures to a petition signed by 20% of the highest vote cast in the primaries for a candidate for that office.

Persons in other parts of the country wrote to ask Sinclair the significance of the EPIC program for them and their communities. Young idealists were distressed by the thought that his name would be used in the interest of the Democratic party in places where this party had no element of idealism in it. What, for example, was the relation of EPIC to Tammany Hall? To such correspondents the candidate replied:

"I have said that Plan comes first, and Party second. The purpose of EPIC is not to favor any group of politicians, but to end poverty. The program has been devised to fit a certain community. How to fit it to other communities is a separate problem.

In cities of the East, such as New York, Boston and Chicago, the Democratic party is a racket, and it is hard to imagine the people being able to capture it and turn it to their own uses. On the other hand, in the middle and far West the people still have some of their old freedom, and by means of the direct primary, and initiative, referendum and recall, they can seize control of their political affairs. The only general statement one can make is that whatever plan will most quickly end poverty is the right plan, because poverty is the supreme crime against the human race, and the source of nine-tenths of the evils which afflict us."

Ordinarily it was the practice of the old parties to put off their major efforts until the month of October; experience having taught them that voters get tired of too long a campaign and of too much repetition of slogans. But the EPIC supporters realized that this was not merely a political campaign, but a program of adult education, and their work went on continuously. It was not enough that the voters should be persuaded to cast a ballot; they must understand what they were voting for, and be able to convince others. Nor would their work be completed on election day; they would have to watch their chosen representatives through every stage of a long political and economic struggle.

A special effort was made to reach the churches. Sinclair said: "It is impossible for me to understand how any group of people organized in the name of Jesus can support the continuation of poverty, with all the degradation and misery it causes to the human race." He quoted to the clergymen the words of Jesus, and of his brother James. "Woe unto you, ye rich men!" He quoted to each of the churches their own recent pronouncements on social justice. The Methodist Episcopal General Conference of 1932 had declared: "We realize now that the basic assumptions of our social order . . . are unchristian." The California Christian Social Action Conference of 1932 had declared: "The present economic and industrial order stands condemned before the bar of Christian justice. Its central motive is production for profit instead of need . . . it increasingly places the wealth of the world in the hands of a few while the masses cry out in vain."

How, said Sinclair, could any member of these churches justify himself for casting a ballot against EPIC? How could any Catholic do it when all the early church fathers had denounced interest taking, and had demanded community of goods? Pope Leo XIII said: "A small number of very rich men have been able to lay upon the masses of the poor a yoke little better than slavery itself." And again: "To exercise pressure

for the sake of gain upon the indigent and destitute and to make one's profit out of the need of another, is condemned by all laws, human and divine." The present Pope says: "Every sincere observer is conscious that the vast differences between the few who hold excessive wealth and the many who live in destitution constitute a grave evil in modern society." And again: "Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain; the whole economic life has become hard, cruel and relentless in a ghastly measure." How, therefore, could any Catholic oppose the EPIC program?

How could any Jew oppose EPIC, when the Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1932, had said: "Present-day capitalism is under grim suspicion as to its ability ever to achieve a satisfactory sense of social responsibility." And again: "We challenge the system which, as late as March, 1932, permitted interest and dividend payments in industry to remain almost 20% higher than they were in 1926, while factory payrolls diminished to less than 50% of what they were at that time."

Also there developed a strong movement among the teachers. The school machine in California was completely in the hands of Big Business, as indeed it was throughout the United States. But the rank and file teachers were having more and more difficulty in explaining to young people the scarcity of work and of hope for the new generation. Teachers began asserting their rights as citizens and speaking in public meetings in support of EPIC.

The same thing was happening to the civil servants of the State. Prices rose, but salaries of the white-collar class stayed behind. All through that summer it was becoming apparent that the NRA program was failing, and more and more desperate measures were being taken in Washington. It was hard for the newspapers of California to maintain their opposition to EPIC, when on the same page they were obliged to publish utterances by the President which were even more radical.

"Why do we have to leave everything to the Federal government?" demanded Sinclair. "Why do we have to trust our affairs to a bureau in Washington? Why do we have to assume that only Uncle Sam has any money? We have boundless natural resources here in California; we have willing labor; why can we not put our idle people to work and make wealth—instead of having Washington rent it to us, fastening a burden of debt upon our children? They tell us we will not be able to raise the money to buy land and machinery in California. Well, I look at the financial statements of California banks and I discover that our people have nearly three billions of dollars

with them. When as Governor I can say: 'It is your duty as a citizen to take your money out of the private banks, and let your State use it to put men and women to work, so that they can produce food for themselves and taxing power for the State'—I believe that not everybody in California will answer No. What is more, the bankers of California believe this. Why else are they putting up the campaign funds to defeat EPIC? They tell you that this plan will fail, but I tell you they are not afraid of its failing, they are horribly afraid of its succeeding."

Sinclair promised the voters a change in the conduct of the office of Governor. "The genial and sunny gentleman who holds your highest office today considers himself an agent of the financial magnates of whom he is one. Outwardly he is all smiles, and his job is to attend State fairs and Elks' conventions and banquets of the Native Sons, and there to exhibit a gleaming shirt-front and immaculate grooming, and beam upon all and utter amiable platitudes. When a question of public policy arises he goes to a private conference with the great San Francisco bankers and their attorneys, and they tell him what to do and he does it. When the Hearst papers told him to kill the income tax, which is a tax on wealth, and to approve the sales tax, which is a tax on poverty, he did it. Later, when the Honorable James Rolph discovered that every man who bought a package of cigarettes was saying 'a penny for Jimmy,' his feelings were hurt, and he tried to put the blame upon somebody else. Now he is horrified by EPIC, and tells you that it means ruin in California. What I tell you is that he took over this State with a surplus of $24,000,000, and he is going to leave it with a deficit of $60,000,000, something for which, I, his successor, do not thank him.

"When I am Governor of this State there is going to be a revolution in the gubernatorial office. There are going to be no lawyers and lobbyists of Big Business in my chambers, and if there are any in the Capitol building, or in the city of Sacramento, I will tell you their names and what they are there for. I have watched for years the business of the 'invisible government' of our nation and our states, and I have figured out a program whereby that government can be brought into sight. It will involve some inconvenience, but it will make the office into a school for the education of the voters.

"This is the course to which I pledge myself, here and now. From the day of my inauguration I will have no conference or conversation with any man or woman concerning the affairs of the State and the policies to be carried out, except that conference takes place in a public reception room, with a stenog-

rapher present to make a record of it, and with the public, including the press, invited to be present.

"In other words, what I will do is to conduct the Governor's office as a court is conducted; and there will be no star chamber proceedings, nor executive sessions, nor other device whereby the Governor can be secretly reached and influenced. Every day, for what number of hours may be necessary, I will hold conferences upon the affairs of the State. I will grant interviews to all persons who give good reasons for wanting to see me. Each person will be furnished with a transcript of the interview, and a copy will be a part of the public records; also a copy will be available in the reporters' room, and the reporters may attend the conferences and make such reports as they please.

"The above proposition will apply to the Governor's sessions with his advisers, with members of the Legislature, and all persons who have anything to ask or to recommend. The people of California will know exactly what advice is being given to their Governor, and what plans he is forming. The procedure will apply to all applicants for office, and to all who recommend such applicants. The people will know what kind of persons I am appointing, what qualifications I am considering, what instructions I am giving, what promises I am asking from public officials. They will know what every bill means, and who is advocating it, and why. The same principles will apply to all letters written by the Governor about public questions; carbon copies of these letters will be furnished to the press. In short, I will conduct the office of Governor of California in a gold-fish bowl, and the people of the State may sit around it and watch.

"When I make this promise I am not blind to the difficulties involved. I know that I will make mistakes and that these will be magnified. I know that my enemies will ask embarrassing questions and try to pin me down to compromising answers. I know that the newspapers will pick out grotesque and absurd incidents to feature. But I believe that the people will understand that I am sincerely trying to represent their interests, and keep my campaign promises, and end poverty in California. The people will find out who their enemies are and what they are trying to do, and in the long run those enemies will get more trouble than they are able to make, and will learn that the gold-fish bowl is a boiling kettle for them."

The campaign fund for the defeat of EPIC was the greatest ever raised in the State of California. There was no money to feed the starving, but there were millions to keep them from getting a chance to produce food for themselves. All pretense

at fair play was thrown away and the slanderers came out into the open. Addressing his supporters, Sinclair reminded them of the campaign of 1924, when LaFollette was making such inroads upon the Coolidge vote.

"In August and September we thought we had the victory. Everywhere we went the people were with us. But in the last three weeks of the campaign the enemy turned loose their heavy artillery. I was living in Pasadena at the time, and I watched the thing with the feeling of a man bound hand and foot and witnessing a murder. It was a murder not of flesh and blood, but of truth and decency. Meetings were held in every neighborhood, and leaflets and campaign papers were distributed from house to house, and seldom in my life have I read such a mass of lies as were turned loose against LaFollette and his supporters and their program. We were helpless, because we had no money, we had no campaign papers, we had only a few speakers and only a few meeting-places. The radio was new in those days, but it was booming lies all over the country, and we had no means to buy our share of time.

"I warn you that the same thing is coming this October. The fear of our enemies is great and their money support is ample. All we can do is to educate the people in advance; explain to them every detail of our plan and warn them as to what the enemy will do and say. We have to answer every lie before it is invented. We have to make the people understand our present social system, in which a privileged few control the sources of wealth and exploit the labor of the many. Those few control all the channels of publicity and information, and the crisis which we Americans confront at the present day is precisely this, that the people, who are supposed to use their votes to protect themselves, are kept in ignorance and do not know how to make use of their rights.

"That is the struggle of Democracy today: to overcome the power which the business autocracy holds over newspapers, magazines, radios, moving pictures, universities and colleges, schools, churches, and political parties. These things they control because they hold the purse-strings, and without money it is impossible to reach the people, to give them facts and ideas, to change their opinions or move them to action. We must make the people understand that this is their fight, not ours. It is a fight for their liberation, their happiness—their very existence in the future. If we do not solve this problem of poverty, we shall have civil war, as certain as tomorrow's sunrise. We shall have Fascism, which means the end of everything that makes life worth living to an American Democrat."

Sinclair gave the voters a picture of the control of industry, finance and politics in their State. He showed the great power corporations, and those of water, gas and telephone, railroads and city traction, with their enormous financial reserves, controlling credit and manipulating markets for the benefit of a little group of insiders. These corporations took charge of politics in order to name public service commissioners and protect their own rates, so that they could pay dividends and pile up surpluses even during a depression. He cited the sums they had contributed to political campaigns. In the year 1922 and again in 1924 there had been an effort made to persuade the people to endorse a program of State water and power development. The power companies contributed a half-million-dollar campaign fund, to be used in blinding the voters on this issue. As a result, it was the power companies which had issued bonds and now owned the power resources of the State. The people were paying a tribute of tens of millions of dollars per year upon these bonds, and more tens of millions in the form of higher rates to furnish profits on watered stocks of these gigantic corporations.

He showed the colossal graft of the title insurance business in California. Up in Canada, when you sold a piece of real estate, you paid fifty cents for a Torrens title from the State. But in Califronia you paid anywhere from $20 to $50 to a private title company; the banks made that necessary, by refusing to accept any other title certificate. He showed also the cruelty of the trust deed laws of the State. If you borrowed money on your home or your ranch, and delayed a single day with the interest payments, the whole amount, principal and interest, fell due, and you had 122 days in which to raise the money, or lose your property without right of redemption. Under that law, written and maintained by the banks, 8930 persons in Los Angeles County had lost their property in the first seven months of 1933, the value being more than $52,000,000.

He showed how the great banks were tied in with the system, and were rapidly taking possession of the State through foreclosure proceedings. One-third of the real estate of Los Angeles County had changed hands since the depression, and the banks had got most of it. He told the story of the Griffith bequest—a philanthropist had left to the people of Los Angeles securities worth more than eight hundred thousand dollars for the building of an open air theatre and a planetarium in Griffith Park. These funds had been left in trust with the Security-First National Bank, which had had them for nine years. They had built a theatre at a cost of $125,000, but the planetarium had never been started. The bank had invested the funds in poor

grade securities, and now told the public the estate had depreciated to little more than one hundred thousand dollars. When a group of citizens investigated this matter and reported the findings to the newspapers, the leading journals of Los Angeles suppressed the story, and published instead large advertisements of the Security-First National Bank.

Soon after this, Sinclair received a letter from a lady who said she had some information she wished to give him. Being busy at the time, he asked her to call upon his lawyer, but the lady came to the Sinclair home. The boy who opened the door reported that there was an attractive blonde young lady downstairs, and Sinclair told the boy to follow him into the reception room and occupy himself somehow during the interview. The lady started to tell her story; then seeing the boy, she stated that what she had to say was strictly confidential. Sinclair said that the boy was dependable, but that if the lady preferred, he would ask his wife to come and hear the story. He went upstairs to summon his wife, and when he returned the young lady had taken an abrupt departure. Telling this incident at a meeting, Sinclair remarked: "My enemies may as well give up trying these time-worn methods, because I have known too many victims of them. I shall see to it that during this campaign, and if I am elected, during my incumbency, I am never alone in any room or automobile or other place with any woman except my wife and my secretaries.

He told a story of a drive he was making to Fresno to speak at a meeting: at a dangerous turn in the state highway four men in an automobile had made an effort to force his car over the edge of a bluff, and only quickness of driving had saved him. Sinclair said to the audience: "That also is something which has happened before in history, and I know only one way to protect myself from it: to make plain to the enemies of EPIC that even if I am shot in my bed some night, or if my home is blown up by a bomb, the movement will go on just the same. As I have been traveling about the State I have consulted with others as to who would be best man to take my place, in the event that I do not live through this campaign. We have agreed upon one person, and I am going to name him to you, and ask you to accept him as my 'understudy.' It is necessary to have unity in a crisis, so I ask you to agree upon him, and pledge yourselves that you will accept his leadership, and work just as hard for him as you would for me. Understand, my saying this is no empty bit of melodrama, but a necessary precaution; for the gangster system is flourishing in and around my home, and it is possible to have anybody in Los Angeles killed for a hundred

dollars. Needless to say, I would much prefer to sleep safely in my bed, and work quietly in my garden, and do nothing to draw the attention of the gangsters and their paymasters to myself; but having started in this fight I am going through with it, and I tell you this aspect of the situation as well as all others."

Sinclair kept a card-file of persons in California who wrote to him during the campaign, and when he traveled he met a number of them, and studied their character and qualifications, having in mind the help he would need in the event of success. He made no promises to anyone; he told the voters that he would come to the Governor's office unpledged, and any appointments he made would be based upon one consideration, the carrying out of the plan.

At the outset of the campaign very few of his friends had believed there was a possibility of success. But these persons had not realized how the depression would hold on, or the breakdown of business and finance in the State. The sufferings of the people constituted the soil in which the seeds of EPIC sprouted, and in the course of a year they grew to a forest. The voters flocked to the standard because there was no other place for them to go. The other candidates, having the money of vested interests in their pockets, could not advocated any course that threatened these interests.

In the last few weeks of the campaign, while the lie factories were grinding out their products, Sinclair accepted invitations of various groups where he would have an apportunity to meet the Republican candidate and ask him questions. This gentleman had referred to EPIC as "Sinclair's pipe dream." He declared it madness to suppose that the people of California would incur three hundred million dollars of debt to enable Sinclair to try out his socialistic theories. Sinclair asked him:

"What are the people of California doing today? They are spending close to a hundred million dollars per year upon half relief for their destitute people. Either they are putting up this money themselves or they are borrowing it from the Federal Government. The pretense that it can be begged from private charity is dead. A hundred million dollars per year is 33⅓% interest on a three-hundred-million-dollar investment. If I can persuade the people to buy small denomination bonds of the State of California, in the place of putting their money into private savings banks, then the people of California will be able to take care of their unemployed at something like one-twelfth the present cost. And yet my Republican opponent thinks he is a business man! Shall I tell you what is the matter? His business judgment is all right, only he is using it for the bankers and not for you."

October came, and the heavy artillery was brought into action as Sinclair had predicted. Hired speakers were sent throughout the State; but it was found that all the brass bands and red fire did not bring as many people as came to the EPIC meetings. The radio carried the eloquence of the hired orators all over the State. It was, so these orators declared, a campaign to protect American institutions from long-haired cranks and wild-eyed visionaries and secret emissaries of the Third International. Said Sinclair:

"I am unable to see why wholesale robbery should be allowed to wrap itself in the folds of the Stars and Stripes. I am unable to see why patriotism forbids the American people to take charge of their own affairs and provide themselves with the necessities of life. I assert that if the principles of Democracy are good for politics, they are equally good for industry. I say that if it was right for our forefathers to turn out King George III of England and his governors and officials, it is equally right for the people of California to take back at least part of the resources which have been stolen from them by three generations of wholesale graft, speculation, and monopoly. I think that I can establish just as satisfactory credentials as an American and a patriot as any person on the opposition ticket, or as any of the exploiters and speculators who have put up campaign funds and hired men to slander our cause and deceive the voters of California."

The voters apparently thought so too, for they went to the polls to cast their ballots for EPIC, and again the watchers of EPIC were there to see the votes counted. That evening it was known to the people of California and many other places that the EPIC program had swept the State by a majority of more than a hundred thousand.

CHAPTER V

The Doing of the Job

The election occurred early in November and the inauguration on the first of January, so the EPIC group had seven or eight weeks in which to map out their plan of action. Sinclair had by this time acquired a knowledge of the men and women most devoted to the cause, and had decided which among them were best adapted to executive work.

Many came to see him, and appeals were made and wires were pulled. It was known that the Governor-elect paid more attention to the judgments of his wife than to any other's, so his wife had busy days.

In the various college groups Sinclair had met professors who were experts in government and financial affairs. He had watched these men and tested them, and now made use of their technical knowledge. The newspapers soon began to feature a "California brain trust."

During his eighteen years in the State the Governor-elect had come to know the old-time fighters for the people. In the north was Fremont Older, whose book, "My Own Story," is a document of our history. Also, Franklin K. Hichborn, tireless collector of the facts of misgovernment. There was Stitt Wilson, and among the journalists, such men as George P. West and John D. Barry, who knew the affairs of the State well.

In the south was Manchester Boddy, newspaper publisher turned crusader, and Reuben Borough, formerly of the Municipal League. There was Dr. John R. Haynes, tireless defender of what he called Fundamental Democracy, a man who had established a foundation and expected to will his great fortune to the cause. There was the Civil Liberties group, headed by Clinton J. Taft, who had retired from a Congregational pulpit to give ten years to the protection of civil rights; John Beardsley, John C. Packard, and a number of other lawyers familiar with public affairs and personalities.

The business of the State required the Governor to have an office in San Francisco and one in Los Angeles, and as Sinclair traveled from one place to another he had frequent meetings with these friends. To a committee of legal experts he entrusted the formation of the dozen laws which were to carry out the EPIC plan. Each of these laws was to be simple and all-embracing; they would have to stand the scrutiny of the highest-priced capitalist lawyers in the State, and no doubt would have to run the gauntlet of the courts.

There was the task of selecting land for the colonies. In the agricultural schools men had been trained for this sort of job, and it happened that Sinclair knew several large-scale ranchers who were heart and soul with the EPIC program, and had contributed to its funds. Of course, his mail was full of letters from real estate owners and agents whose mouths watered at the idea of selling tracts of land to the State. Many of these tracts were insufficiently provided with water, and others too sufficiently provided with alkali. Having portrayed the high-pressure salesmen of the real estate companies in his books, Sinclair was able to recognize them.

He realized that this was the most dangerous single problem he had to confront. The emergency was great and action must be taken at once. He therefore addressed a letter to the incumbent Governor, pointing out that the people of California had voted to establish land colonies for the support of the unemployed; there was no time to be lost, because distress was increasing, and its victims were being incited to riot, and many cities and counties were bankrupt. The task of selecting and appraising suitable land was one which necessarily required time, if graft and waste were to be avoided, and if the people were to get value for their money. Sinclair respectfully called upon the Governor to enable this program to get under way, by appointing a commission of land experts to be named by Sinclair; also a commission to inspect factories and industrial plants. To this proposition the Governor patriotically gave his consent, and the commissions got to work without delay. It happened that at this time there was another bank collapse, and the masters of industry and finance in California were in a chastened frame of mind.

Also the Governor-elect utilized this preliminary period to make a study of the elected officials and members of the State legislature. His advisers compiled a card-file of all these personalities. An actual majority of the members of both houses stood pledged to EPIC, so unless some of them were bought off by the enemy, the plan was safe.

A few days before the inauguration Sinclair announced that there would be no display of any sort in connection with the ceremonies. He requested that those who were expecting to wear gold braid or short pants would give up the idea. There would be no inaugural ball; at least it would not be attended by the new Governor. "It will be time to dance when we have done our job," he stated. "Then the people can have an old-time celebration. For the present I intend to take no part in any social affairs. I have made it a life-rule not to wear evening dress, and I shall not change this rule as Governor. All my thought and my time

will be given to EPIC, until the last item has been written into the laws and put into complete operation."

The first of January came and the inauguration ceremony took place. The retiring Governor behaved politely, and Sinclair retained no memories of what had been said during the campaign. Immediately after having taken the oath of office, he stepped to the microphone and said: "As Governor of California my first action is to sign a pardon to Thomas J. Mooney. I commission a messenger to take this document to the warden of San Quentin prison, and obtain Mooney's release. At the same time I offer to him my profound apologies for the injustice which the State of California has done to him for the past eighteen years."

The new Governor delivered his inaugural address. He ended:

"The situation which confronts the State of California calls for the unselfish efforts of every true citizen. Our industrial system has broken down, and refuses any longer to function. For a large part of our people there is no longer any work, or means of living, or hope for the future. To expect these people to submit quietly to extermination—that is the true way to be 'Utopian' in this present hour. Starvation in the midst of plenty exists not merely in California, but all over the world; and elsewhere it has been the cause of cruel class struggles, which have destroyed liberty and brought nations to ruin. Are we justified in our faith in Democracy? Is there really something about it which guarantees safety, progress, freedom? Here is the test of our institutions, and we call upon our people to prove by loyalty and sacrifice that neither the faith of our fathers nor the hope of our posterity is a delusion. Fellow-citizens, let us join hands and hearts in this crisis. Let us say that we are California; that her safety is ours and her progress, and that we will build up her fortunes rather than our own. She is our mother, and we trust her, and do not fear for our reward."

The Legislature assembled and the Governor delivered his message in person. It was a brief message, and easily understood. He said:

"Members of the Legislature and fellow-citizens: I do not need to tell you that we are meeting in the midst of a crisis; or that we are meeting to perform a new task; or that the world is watching to see how we do it. We must act at once, if we are not to fail entirely. Our motto from this day must be action, and then again action. I have the duty to lay before you a series of measures embodying the twelve steps of EPIC. I have pledged myself to see that this plan is carried into immediate effect, and I call upon you to do your part. You have heard many say that in this crisis we need a dictator. I am the last man who would

wish to be a dictator, and if you hear anything that sounds like a master's voice, realize that it is not mine, but the voice of the people of California. They have spoken, and they will speak again and again, as loudly as necessary.

"I am going to put these measures of EPIC before you, one at a time. I point out to you that these measures have been carefully drawn by experts; what they are intended to do has been fully explained to the people in an educational campaign of fifteen months. The period of discussion has passed. The people have a right to expect that you will pass each of these measures in turn, with a delay of not more than twenty-four hours for each measure. That will be time enough for opponents to put themselves on record. The friends of the measures need say nothing, because the measures do their own talking.

"Some of you before me are not pledged to EPIC; some of you are pledged to opposition. To you I say, this program is going through. The people have willed it, and the people rule in this State. The emergency is such that it is your patriotic duty not to delay these measures, but allow the people to make a trial of them. If, as you think, the principles are wrong, this will be proved in action, and the measures will be repealed. If there is any man here who cannot assent to this, and who takes it upon himself to thwart the people's will, I am prepared to carry the fight against this man to the people, and they will deal with him. I hope and assume that no such step will be necessary.

"To the pledged supporters of EPIC I speak, not formally as Governor, but humanly as a friend and comrade. Some of you are older than I in years, but few are older than I in knowledge of the treacheries and stratagems of organized greed. I warn you that you here face the great trial of your lives. Be equal to it, and show that government of the people, by the people, and for the people has not perished from California.

"The incomes which the State pays you for your services are small. Some day, when we have brought back prosperity to all, I will help to have them increased. Meanwhile, whatever your incomes are, live within them. Do not try to keep up with the style of our enemies. If your wives are with you, ask them to wear simple clothing and avoid display which will embarrass others who cannot afford it. Keep away from the glad-handers and the lobbyists who are swarming to this city. Do not let them buy you dinners, and especially do not let them buy you drinks. Keep away from the beautiful and fascinating ladies—remember there is nothing for which the enemy would pay a higher price just now than a photograph of one of the leaders of EPIC in a compromising position with one of these ladies.

"I ask you to stay with our own friends, work hard on your committees, help us shepherd the weak brothers, study our measures and explain them to the folks at home, put the measures through in record time, and then go home and help carry them into effect and make a success of our first experiment in Industrial Democracy."

The Governor's next action was to address a letter to the heads of the large radio stations in California. He pointed out that during the campaign for the EPIC plan there had been no pretense on the part of radio stations to equality of treatment for both sides of the controversy. "But that time is past," said the Governor. "I am speaking now with authority, and I venture to say that the people of California wish to know about what is being done in their State capital; that the proceedings going on here are at least as important as the out-givings of Mutt and Jeff and Tootsie Toodles, and the virtues of cigarettes and soaps and hair-tonics. I am asking you to place at the disposal of your Governor a desirable radio hour on two evenings of each week, whereby he may speak to the people over a network which will reach the entire State. I furthermore ask that in case of emergency the Governor may have radio time at not more than six hours' notice. I hope you will agree with me that the public interest requires these arrangements, and that you will not make it necessary for me to call upon the Legislature to exercise the right of eminent domain, or to impose special taxes upon radio."

The next step was the opening of the "Governor's Gold-fish Bowl," as the newspapers called it. A reception room was fitted in the executive offices. The Governor sat at a large table, and on either side were seats for his attorneys and advisers when needed. Opposite to him sat the visitor. Tables were provided for the press and about a hundred seats for the public. The Governor explained briefly that this procedure was for the purpose of keeping the people of California informed as to how their affairs were being conducted. At the beginning, under the pressure of the emergency, it would be necessary to limit interviews to urgent business. Later there might be time to hear those who had anything of importance to say concerning the welfare of the State. Stenographers would take down the proceedings.

This unusual plan caught the attention of the public. It was the first time in history that a government had really dealt openly with the voters. The idea was so startling, and the clashes of personality were so entertaining, that the newspapers were obliged to report what went on in the Governor's Gold-fish Bowl. Presently it occurred to one of the radio stations that this was an inexpensive form of public entertainment. They asked permission

to install a microphone, and this was permitted, and it was not long before the national broadcasting companies heard of it, and important sessions in the Gold-fish Bowl were listened to by the entire country.

Here the Governor received his critics and heard their objections to his program, and answered them before the whole State. Chairmen of legislative committees and leaders of EPIC came to report. The candidates for office came. Those who received appointments were here told their duties and made their pledges before the people. To each of these the Governor spoke as to the commander of an army.

"We are trying an experiment which will help to determine the future of mankind, and certainly the future of America. Can we make Democracy work in industry? Can the people manage their own business, and provide food, clothing and shelter for themselves? Or do they have to work for masters, and be ordered what to do, and receive only a bare living in return for their labors? This is what we are going to find out in California, and every enemy of Democracy throughout the world wishes us failure. I have chosen you because you have special training. You made promises to me, and I now ask you to make them to the people. You will be a public servant, a guardian of public property and a director of public production. Pledge yourself to set aside every private interest so long as you hold this public office; to set aside not only your own interests, but those of your relatives, friends, corporations, stockholders—whatever previous groups you have had to do with. You are going to work unremittingly and whole-heartedly for the success of Industrial Democracy in California. You are going to spend no money belonging to the people without getting the utmost possible value. You are not going to hire any person because he is your relative, your friend, your client, a member of your party—or for any other reason whatsoever except that he is the best man to do the job. I ask you to make that pledge before the people of California."

One by one the EPIC measures were driven through the Legislature. The first time one of the EPIC legislators began to waver and cast a vote against the plan, the Governor summoned him to the Gold-fish Bowl, and said: "Mr. X, what has happened? You had more than a year to study these measures. You accepted them, and were elected upon the basis of that acceptance. You are no longer a free man, but a trustee of the voters of California. Are you going to betray your trust?"

Mr. X began to explain that he had not understood the measure. The Governor said: "I am told that you have been playing poker in one of the rooms at the Blank Hotel. Is that true?

I understand that you have been playing with Charley Y and Robbie Z. You cannot be unaware of the reasons they are here, one as the hired lobbyist of the power trust, the other as attorney for the gas interests. They are notoriously bad poker players—that is to say, they lose large sums of money continually, and always to members of the State Legislature. How much have they lost to you?" The result of this interview was that X went back to the capitol and voted for the EPIC measures.

The first bill passed was the provision for land colonies. It was necessary to ask immediate action, because crops had to be got into the ground during the rainy season. The Legislature set up the California Authority for Land (the CAL) with a board of five commissioners. The Governor appointed two practical ranchers, an agricultural expert from the State University, a real estate expert, and a labor man. The man who was head of the land buying was the meanest man in California, and the Governor said in the Gold-fish Bowl that he was selected for that reason, and stood pledged to buy the land as if he were buying it for himself.

The man who was in charge of the agricultural operations had long been known to the Governor. He was a wholesale dealer in food-stuffs, and a grower who loved the soil so passionately that his idea of a holiday was to go out and work twelve hours in his fields. As it happened, he was a "radical," and had spent his spare time arguing in favor of co-operation. When he had to do with the State colonies he forgot about being a "radical," and became what he really wanted to be, a director of large-scale food production for use and not for profit.

An emergency bill was rushed through the Legislature to provide the first finances. Money was appropriated from the general fund, and the issuing of tax warrants was authorized, also loans from the banks. CAL was authorized to rent tracts of land for a year with the option of purchase, and many of the colonies were started in that way. The people came walking or hitchhiking, long before anything was ready for them. They went to work, often without being hired. They slept in their old cars and asked only for food in return for their labors.

In Sacramento the commissioners of CAL were laboring as the managers of the NRA had labored in Washington, day and night. Lumber was bought and shipped to the colonies, and the camps were laid out, and the volunteer workers set to work with saws and hammers, and tent platforms were built, and presently rose the tents, old and new. Said the Governor: "I lived a year in the State of Delaware in a tent, and while it is not luxury, I know that it is possible to be comfortable and in the best of

health in a tent with snow on the ground outside. Certainly it is better than sleeping in doorways and under bridges as our unemployed are doing. It would be a libel on the climate of California to say that our colonists can not winter in tents, and however I may libel the profiteers of California, you may be sure that I will never libel the climate."

The tent villages arose, and larger tents were erected for the kitchens and eating rooms, and hungry people were provided with three substantial meals every day. The tractors came chugging and gang plows were hitched up, and it was not long before beans and wheat and potatoes were in the ground. The Governor came to the first of these colonies, and a microphone was set up, and he made a speech to which the people of California listened.

"My fellow colonists: For more than thirty years I have been demanding colonies, and I am grateful to this depression which has made it possible to establish co-operative agriculture in California. I point out that you have all the powerful financial interests of this State against you, and you have only common sense, human brotherhood, and the Christian religion on your side. It is up to you to prove that human beings do not have to be snarling wolves or sly lynxes, but can be rational, just, and kindly members of a commonwealth. You have come here in extreme need, sometimes destitute, and many of you probably have only a vague idea of what it is all about. I am not going to lecture you at length, but will leave it for the facts of economics to prove themselves in action. You are going to be under the management of men who believe in the principles of co-operation, and have pledged themselves to apply them in this colony. You have lived hitherto in a world of dog eat dog and the devil take the hindmost. You have been taught by harsh experience that the dogs have teeth, and that the devil has a sharp pitchfork. I ask you to try to forget those evil principles, and adjust yourselves to the idea of solidarity, friendship, and the Golden Rule.

"This colony belongs to you as citizens of the State of California. Everything in it is yours, and if you waste or destroy, it is your own loss. Work as you would work for yourselves. Give your time in full measure, and be sure that your reward will come. Those in charge will watch you, and if they see that you are a slacker and shirker, you will be put at a routine job where you can be checked up hour by hour. If you prove yourself utterly worthless, you will be kicked out, and will go back to that way of life which has been known as 'rugged individualism.' If you prove yourself a man of conscience, and one who can carry responsibility, you will be promoted.

"In the beginning you will receive very modest wages, just enough to keep you going; but it will be better than charity, and you will know that you are building up a community which will be your home, and in which some day you will be proud to live as a member and a citizen. Our first aim is to get food and shelter for everybody, and a chance for productive labor. You will create wealth by your own efforts, and rest assured that as fast as you produce you will get the benefit.

"As you see, you have to live in tents. Your forefathers came in covered wagons, far less comfortable than tents, and they faced the dangers of hunger, drought, and wild Indians. You now have the Government to protect you against the wild Indians of speculation and greed. You are going to have good, substantial food, and blankets to keep you warm at night, and as quickly as the Government can get hold of the money and materials, you will build yourselves suitable buildings and have the use of them.

"I welcome you to your new role of citizens of industry. I ask you to study and understand what we are trying to do. Take your places in a producing commonwealth; go to work with energy and enthusiasm; watch out for grafters and thieves and report them to me; watch out for shirkers and slackers, and report them to your own community, for the discipline which your co-operative interests demand.

"This is your land, this is your home, and your future is what you make it. It has been my practice to ask all whom I appoint to office to make me a public pledge before the people of this State. I now ask that you men and women co-operators in California's first land colony will raise your right hands and give me your pledge of loyalty and devotion to this institution. I am not asking you to agree to stay here. You are not slaves, but free citizens, and you may go at any time you can find anything better. What I ask you is that while you live in this place, and eat its bread and take its wages, you will give it loyal service, and do with all your energies the work you undertake."

The next measure to pass the Legislature and be signed by the Governor was that establishing the California Authority for Money (the CAM). To the management of this institution the Governor appointed a man whom he had known for years, who had played the game of stocks and bonds, and knew every trick of Wall Street in New York, La Salle Street in Chicago, and Spring Street in Los Angeles. He had quit the game in disgust and told Sinclair much about the insides of it. Now he was glad to give his expert knowledge to the financing of the EPIC program.

In the course of the debate over the issue of scrip for use in exchanging the products of CAL and CAP, the opposition declared that the proposal was unconstitutional, and that the Supreme Court would throw out the law. Discussing this over the radio, the Governor said:

"I am pledged to support the Constitution, and it is my intention to bring about EPIC under the forms of the Constitution. But that does not deprive me of my right as a citizen to state that the action of our courts in vetoing acts of Congress and of State legislatures is wholly unconstitutional and arbitrary. I am informed that on several occasions in this State the people have voted for constitutional amendments, and have then been told by the Supreme Court of the State that their action was invalid. We are confronting today a crisis in which the future of our country is at stake, and it is intolerable that any small group of men should be permitted to balk the will of the people expressed at the polls. The Constitution of the State of California provides that the Supreme Court shall consist of seven members. There is nothing to prohibit the altering of this number, and if the Supreme Court of California should veto any of our EPIC measures, I will advise the people immediately to start an initiative procedure and increase the number of Supreme Court justices to seventeen. I have in my notebook the names of ten lawyers in this State who can be depended upon to construe the Constitution and the laws in the interest of the whole people."

The bond issue for CAM had to be authorized by referendum vote of the people, and this was the crucial point in the progress of EPIC. Every private interest in the State was opposing this large bond issue. If it failed, the whole plan was crippled, and so the Governor carried the fight directly to the people, and used his newly won power over the radio to reach them. He said:

"The Big Business interests of California were willing to see the bonded indebtedness of State, cities and counties increase by 2800% in the last 20 years. That was while the banks were handling the loans, and Big Business was getting the contracts. But now that you want to do something for yourselves, they say that it means ruin for you! They tell you that these bonds will not be repaid. But I tell you they will be a debt of honor for the State of California. I am avoiding the regular means of selling securities. I am going directly to you, and certifying my faith in you, and I know my faith will be justified. Take your dollars out of the private banks and bring them to the State of California, and they will be used to buy the best land in the State at bargain prices, and to buy factories and machinery and raw materials to put the people to work. The bonds will be a claim

upon the labor of every honest man and woman in the State. This will be a debt, not merely of the government of California, but of the working class and the producers of California. We are going to buy our State, and work it for ourselves and run it for ourselves, and pay no tribute from this time on to any private exploiters. They tell you there is graft in government; but I tell you there is many times as much graft inside our banking system, and indeed at every stage of the conduct of our system of exploitation. We are going to end that graft once for all."

The bond issue was endorsed, and the bonds printed and sold. Just as the private banking interests had declared, it injured the banking system of the State, and the CAM soon had a chance to purchase some private banks, paying for them the physical valuation of their properties. The CAM was glad to have these properties, because it was taking in large sums of money and needed vaults. The people came and bought the bonds of CAM, and then they put their bonds in safety under the care of CAM.

In the meantime the other measures of EPIC had been passed; including that for the California Authority for Production (the CAP). The emergency funds had been used to buy lumber-yards, brick-factories, cement-factories, canneries, clothing-factories and other idle or bankrupt concerns for producing the immediate necessities. Many factories were needed to provide all the unemployed with work; they worked the seven-hour day of NRA, receiving at the outset the minimum wage of NRA. For every factory and every land colony there were opened up stores, in which you could buy anything that was produced by any of the institutions of CAL and CAP. You could buy these products at actual cost; and these stores were open, not merely to the colonists and workers, but to the general public at hours when they were not crowded. Of course, there was lament from the retailers of the neighborhood, but the friends of EPIC pointed out that anybody was free to become a worker in State industry. The purpose of CAL, CAP, and CAM was to furnish products to the people at the lowest possible prices, and no private interest was going to stand in the way.

CHAPTER VI

VICTORY

The process of EPIC was like that of a swiftly flowing river eating into a sand bank. Private industry began to crumble; and as quickly as any productive enterprise failed, it was made over into a public institution. Nothing could withstand the current of co-operation.

The Big Business men began to realize that it was no longer an advantage to gain enormous incomes, because the State income tax took so large a share of them, and when the owner died the State took so much of the balance. Land speculators found that a 10% tax on idle real estate spelled immediate ruin; they gave up their holdings, and the State took them over, and the colony laborers moved in and built new homes and social buildings, and the land colonists plowed and planted the soil. By the same method vacant lots in the cities were utilized for gardens under the supervision of the ever-vigilant CAL. The workers, having plenty of money for homes, took up all the unused buildings, and CAP soon had enormous jobs of new construction all over the State.

By midsummer, when the new crops began to come in, the system was flourishing. There was food for everybody, and word spread that California was paradise, and all over the United States caravans of automobiles were heading for the Golden State. Nobody worried, because it was known that each of these newcomers would bring a pair of arms and a head. CAL by now had plenty of land, and CAP was turning out building materials, and CAM was no longer a speculative venture, but the one solid reality in a crumbling financial world. Twice a week the people of California listened while their Governor explained to them the fundamental economic fact that if you have land and natural resources, and if you apply labor to these, you produce wealth; then, if you own what you produce, you become able to pay your debts.

One by one the land colonies became self-supporting. After the first year they began paying off their bonds out of their sales of produce. When this process was completed, they would become free, self-governing institutions, democratically managed by their members, selling their own produce in the system, ordering their own supplies and erecting their own buildings. The State of California would exercise no further control over them, except to see that they conformed to the constitution for colonies laid down by CAL—that is, they must pay their bills, keep out

of debt, and choose their managing committees at elections under the American system.

The opposition to EPIC began to collapse, with a suddenness which surprised everybody. The reason was the success of the colonies in planting crops, and the success of the factories in turning out goods. The California farmers knew how to farm, the workers knew how to work, and the managers knew how to manage. It became evident that there was going to be a publicly owned productive unit of enormous dimensions in the State. It also became apparent that the workers in the State-owned industries liked the idea, and could never be separated from it without a war. A great burden had been suddenly lifted off the backs of the people. The problem of the business cycle had been solved. Those who needed goods had the means to buy, therefore production and consumption balanced. It was useless to argue against that. The movement into EPIC became a tide.

Another reason for the dying away of opposition was that the opposers did not have so much money to spend. The graduated taxes were taking a large part of the wealth of the unproductive classes. The profit-takers were losing their customers, and they saw co-operation booming, and realized that the old system was doomed.

A third reason was the continuation of the crisis throughout the nation. The Federal Government was being compelled to carry out the EPIC plan on a larger scale, though without the name. The State governments were beginning to follow, and everybody realized that it was better for local affairs to be managed locally.

A fourth reason was the moral one. EPIC was right, and the right has a way of prevailing. There was prosperity for all inside the system. The people on the outside had many worries, and realized if they came inside, they would have none. There were jobs for all—even for those who had managed capitalist industries, because there was managing to be done in EPIC. The old-time parasites saw their dividends being pared, their money being taken for taxes. What was the use of trying to pile up wealth any more? It was better to sell out for what you could get.

And after all, what was the use of piling up millions which you could not leave to your family? The older people found that the young people were taking it gaily, not worrying about their lost fortunes, because EPIC was so interesting. It was no longer necessary to live on papa's money; and papa, for his part, began to reflect that it had not been entirely good to have the young growing up in idleness. Social ostentation, being no longer

possible, was no longer necessary. The fashions were going out of fashion, because there were so few to pay attention. In short, the new principle won its way, that the production of the necessities of life must be a public service, democratically managed by the community.

In two years the victory was made complete. The great public service corporations, which had been buttressed behind the rate-fixing device, were humbled by the process of taxing them, which reduced the value of their securities. Finally the State of California took them over at physical cost, and thus the greatest source of corruption was gone from American public life. The old order crumbled like a dry-rotted log. Everybody came running, to get a desirable position on the bandwagon.

The people lost their fear of the State, for they discovered that it had become a new thing. It was no longer the incarnation of selfishness, an instrument of repression of exploiting classes. It became the people themselves, doing what they wanted done, with no one to prevent them. The sole question became, what was the most convenient and economical way to get a particular job done? Policemen laid down their clubs and took up tools.

It was interesting to see what became of the great capitalist newspapers, which had dominated the thought of America for a couple of generations. These papers were no longer making money, because there was no private business to provide them with advertising subsidies. Their owners were no longer able to maintain them, and the question arose, how should a community get its news? The problem was solved by the appointment of governing boards selected from various elements. Two members were named by the employees of the paper, two by the faculties of state universities, two were chosen by vote of the readers, and one was appointed by the Governor.

The same thing happened to the radio stations. They could no longer make money, because the advertisers of cigarettes and soaps and hair-tonics no longer subsidized them. They were socialized, and the trash was cut out of their programs.

By the end of the year 1938, the political situation had changed forever. The Republican party had sunk into harmless disuse. Nobody belonged to it, except the members of the Better America Federation and the Daughters of No More American Revolutions. The Democratic party had become a conservative organization, prepared to live forever on the deeds of its ancestors. The Socialist party was active and powerful, basing its campaign on a demand for the socialization of the luxury trades and the complete abolition of inheritance.

The Governor dedicated the last year of his administration to

educating the people to the idea of generous endowments for all forms of scientific research and for the creative arts. He said: "We are winning new leisure; we shall very soon have more than was ever dreamed of in history. When our productive system is thoroughly organized and working at full speed, nobody will have to work more than two hours a day for the State. What are we going to do with the rest of our time? There are all kinds of important problems to be solved—of health, education, psychology, everything from astronomy to zoology. I hope you will make a beautiful and wise use of the opportunities you have won for yourselves."

The Governor made a last speech over the radio, saying that he had caused a careful investigation to be made throughout the State of California, and that the only poor person he had been able to find was a religious hermit who lived in a cave. Therefore he considered his job done, and he purposed to go home and write a novel.

Envoi

Such, reader, is the story; and now, what shall I say to you? Shall I urge you to get busy and make it happen; and have you think, perhaps, that this is one more candidate, and one more political racket, although a new and entertaining one? Or shall I follow my own impulse, and say that this is book number forty-seven, and that I have number forty-eight, and in fact numbers forty-nine and fifty, all ready in my head, and can be quite happy writing them; that there was never a man who wanted less to hold a political office, or who could smile more cheerfully at defeat? And you, the reader, will go to see a ball game, or drive your family to the beach, or mend your shingle-roof, or your hog-pen, or whatever it may be, and all will be well.

But, alas, it won't be. For you will still be in poverty, or on the way to it; and our State will be drifting toward Fascism. So you will have to get your neighbors together and start a political fight; if not now, then very soon. And so I say to you, after thirty-eight years' unremitting study of this problem, and after proving my knowledge of it by predicting in print, thirty years ago, everything that was going to happen—I say to you: This is your way out, and there is no other way, and you will have to take it. I have given you my best in this Book, and now it is up to you.

A practical word about this Book. I am publishing it at my own expense, planning it to take the place of speech-making in the campaign. The price is set at twenty cents a copy, to cover the costs of handling. In order to interest our friends in distributing it, I will send fifteen copies for $1.00, postpaid to any part of the world. If you are down to your last dollar, I will trust you, and you can earn a living by passing on the good word. Get this Book to the people, and our slogan, "End Poverty in California," will become the slogan, not merely of the Golden State, but of the civilized world—and not in some far-off Utopian future, but during the period of this five-year history.

THE WAY OUT

(Reviewed by Rev. John Haynes Holmes of the Community Church, New York, in "Unity," July 24, 1933)

A MODERN PROPHET

Upton Sinclair has long since proved his right to speak on the social questions of the hour. His credentials are not those of the academic professor and the statistical expert. He has no degrees in economics or sociology, and would not be given recognition by any college. But he has been studying the trend of events with an alert mind and a fearless spirit for thirty years, and during all these years he has written not only voluminously but effectively. And as he looks back over his pages in book and pamphlet, he sees the record of prophecies fulfilled. In this book are quotations from "An Open Letter to Lincoln Steffens," written by Mr. Sinclair in 1903 and published in 1904, which proves to have been an amazing example of accurate diagnosis and forecast. In 1907, Mr. Sinclair published a book, "The Industrial Republic," in which are passages which read like an historical narrative of events in 1929-1933. In 1926, he issued "Letters to Judd," a description of the collapse of capitalism so accurate that, in preparing new editions for the presidential campaign of 1932, he "didn't have to revise an essential word." Upton Sinclair is in the enviable position of being able to name chapter and verse to demonstrate that he knew and announced years ago what was coming. This fact is the source of his authority today. He is a prophet justified in his own time by the course of events. He has a right to speak—and to be heard.

But Mr. Sinclair has further credentials. He not only has something to say, but he knows how to say it. Our author, in other words, is not only a world-famous novelist, but the greatest pamphleteer of modern times. He is in the august tradition of Voltaire and Thomas Paine. Not even H. G. Wells in this age can rival him. His easy mastery of material, his flowing, simple, vivid style, his essential narrative genius, his verve and boldness and prophetic fire, all these make him irresistible. Side by side with his novels runs an impressive array of "tracts for the times." Of these, "The Way Out" is the latest, and one of the best.

Written in the form of a series of letters to "Perry," a wealthy scion of the great industrial owning class of this country, this book is a brief and exciting survey of what has happened to us in the last few years, and what can be done about it. The author has little confidence in the "New Deal," though he is curiously sympathetic with the nationalistic tendencies of the administration. Let America work out her own problems, he says, and her success will constitute her best service to the troubled world. And he thinks this success can be won without dependence upon international relations. It is an interesting challenge, interestingly sustained by Roosevelt on the one hand and by Stalin on the other. But at bottom this is incidental to the main theme—which is escape from the present chaos.

We prophesy a wide reading for this admirable book. Closed banks, idle factories, starving farmers, and fifteen million unemployed have plowed the furrows for the sowing of its seed.

JOHN HAYNES HOLMES.

Recent Books by Upton Sinclair

UPTON SINCLAIR PRESENTS WILLIAM FOX

"This story has terrific interest and suspense . . . the most exciting book I have read for years. It is destined to an immense popularity, and will make Upton Sinclair the most widely read author in America."—Floyd Dell.

Cloth, $2.00

THE WET PARADE

Kathleen Norris: "Upton Sinclair's 'The Wet Parade' is magnificent. Not in ten years have I read a novel so strong—so daring—and with so much thrill and humor and human weakness and strength on every page. He has painted the American scene as no other writer of our generation could."

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MOUNTAIN CITY: A Novel

Fulton Oursler: "A corking novel, always interesting and convincing. . . . The narrative's interest magnetizes the reader as completely as anything you have ever done."

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An inside story of the Sacco-Vanzetti case, and the picture of a civilization. Floyd Dell writes: "To my mind, in spite of Tolstoi's 'War and Peace,' and some of Zola's things, there has never been any fiction quite like this of yours. The method really constitutes a great literary invention."

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A novel of Southern California. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle wrote: "I was amazed at the power of the book." Clarence Darrow writes: "Few novels have impressed me as much as 'Oil!'"

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Cloth $2.00, paper $1.00

PUBLISHED BY UPTON SINCLAIR, LOS ANGELES (WEST BRANCH), CALIFORNIA

THE EPIC PLAN

1. A legislative enactment for the establishment of State land colonies, whereby the unemployed may become self-sustaining and cease to be a burden upon the taxpayers. A public body, the California Authority for Land (the CAL) will take the idle land, and land sold for taxes and at foreclosure sales, and erect dormitories, kitchens, cafeterias, and rooms for social purposes, and cultivate the land using modern machinery under the guidance of experts.
2. A public body entitled the California Authority for Production (the CAP), will be authorized to acquire factories and production plants whereby the unemployed may produce the basic necessities required for themselves and for the land colonies, and to operate these factories and house and feed and care for the workers. CAL and CAP will maintain a distribution system for the exchange of each other's products. The industries will include laundries, bakeries, canneries, clothing and shoe factories, cement plants, brick-yards, lumber-yards, thus constituting a complete industrial system, a new and self-sustaining world for those whom our present system can no longer employ.
3. A public body entitled the California Authority for Money (the CAM) will handle the financing of CAL and CAP. This body will issue scrip to be paid to the workers and used in the exchanging of products within the system. It will also issue bonds to cover the purchase of land and factories, the erection of buildings and the purchase of machinery.
4. An act of the legislature repealing the present sales tax.
5. An act of the legislature providing for a State income tax, beginning with incomes of $5000 and steeply graduated until incomes of $50,000 would pay 30% tax.
6. An increase in the State inheritance tax, steeply graduated and applying to all property in the State regardless of where the owner may reside. This law would take 50% of sums above $50,000 bequeathed to any individual and 50% of sums above $250,000 bequeathed by any individual.
7. A law increasing the taxes on public utility corporations according to the value of the franchise.
8. A constitutional amendment revising the tax code of the State, providing that cities and counties shall exempt from taxation all homes occupied by the owners and ranches cultivated by the owners, wherever the assessed value of such homes and ranches is less than $3000. Upon properties assessed at more than $5000 there will be a tax increase of one-half of one per cent for each $5000 of additional assessed valuation.
9. A constitutional amendment providing for a State land tax of 10% upon unimproved building land and agricultural land which is not under cultivation.
10. A law providing for the payment of a pension of $50 per month to every needy person over sixty years of age who has lived in the State of California three years prior to the date of the coming into effect of the law.
11. A law providing for the payment of $50 per month to all persons who are blind, or who by medical examination are proved to be physically unable to earn a living; these persons also having been residents of the State for three years.
12. A pension of $50 per month to all widowed women who have dependent children; if the children are more than two in number, the pension to be increased by $25 per month for each additional child. These also to have been residents three years in the State.